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ABSTRACT

This monograph presents a fictionalized case study of a real Catholic school in Australian society, Christian Brothers College (C.B.C.), which illustrates the manner in which "forces" for both continuity and change are negotiated at C.B.C. After a brief introduction, the volume opens with four thematic papers by separate authors, followed by an extensive ethnographic study of the C.B.C. situation. The four papers are as follows: (1) "Christian Brothers College: A View from Overseas," by Louis M. Smith; (2) "Continuity and Change in the Brothers' Educational Mission," by Lawrence Angus; (3) "Cultural Reproduction of the Labor Market: Work Experience at C.B.C.," by Peter Watkins; and (4) "Reproduction and Contestation: Class, Religion, Gender, and Control at Christian Brothers College," by Richard J. Bates. The subsequent ethnographic study first identifies three main themes: C.B.C. and religious education; administration, authority relations, and pupil control; and education and social mobility. Subsequent topics, analyzed in depth, include reproduction and transformation at C.B.C., social mobility, C.B.C. schooling and access to the job market, C.B.C. and the competitive academic curriculum, the hegemonic curriculum and cultural politics, individual autonomy within institutional control, authority and autonomy at C.B.C., and confronting the future. An annotated bibliography is included. (TE)

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CLASS, CULTURE AND CURRICULUM: A STUDY OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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LAWRENCE ANGUS

EED433 Management of Resources in Schools

Class, Culture and Curriculum: A Study of Continuity and Change in a Catholic School

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Deakin University
Victoria

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The course includes:

Lawrence Angus, *Class, Culture and Curriculum: A Study of Continuity and Change in a Catholic School*

Lawrence Angus, *Schooling, the School Effectiveness Movement and Educational Reform*

Richard Bates, *The Management of Culture and Knowledge*

Richard Bates, *Administrative Arenas: The Social Context of Eductional Administration*

Brian Caldwell & Jim Spinks, *Policy Formation and Resource Allocation*

Peter Watkins, *Time, Organisation and the Administration of Education*

These books are available from Deakin University Press, Victoria, 3217.

Further titles may be added to the list from time to time.

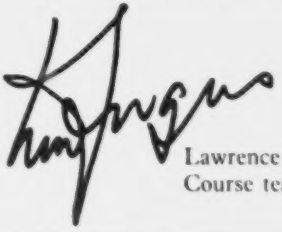
Students enrolled in the course are also supplied with a guide to the course.

Series introduction

This series of monographs critically challenges conventional definitions of school management and school resources. Indeed, it is argued that the most important resources available to schools are cultural. These include conceptions of time, power, appropriate behaviour and dispositions, and knowledge. The management of such resources is considered through an examination of various curricular, pedagogical and administrative processes.

Each monograph develops the significance for educational administration and educational outcomes of such cultural resources. In this way, schooling and educational administration are seen to be inextricably located in a social and political context. The series, then, explores the links between education and society, educational administration and social order, cultural dispositions and educational opportunity, knowledge and hierarchy, school and community. Such issues are discussed at a theoretical and historical level in several monographs and, in others, their adminstrative and educational implications are illustrated by case studies.

An original essay summarising the major arguments concerning education and cultural resources is presented in each monograph. This is supplemented by several key articles. In addition, an annotated bibliography directs readers to important works which are relevant to the themes and issues of the monograph. It is expected that readers will draw connections between the material presented in the series and their own educational experiences. In this way they are encouraged to explore further the cultural and value-laden nature of education and educational administration, and the notion that cultural resources are the most important resources that are managed in schools.



Lawrence Angus,
Course team chairperson

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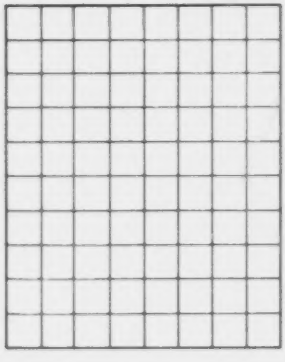
Class, culture and curriculum: A study of continuity and change in a Catholic school



Introduction

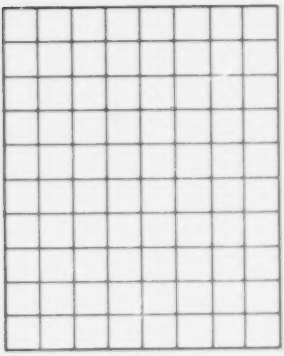
This monograph presents a case study of a Catholic school in Australian society. The school, in the fictitious provincial city of Newburyport, is real, but the names of the participants have been altered to preserve anonymity. Many of the issues that are addressed in *Management of Resources in Schools* will be seen to be of importance at Christian Brothers College (C.B.C.). It will be apparent, for instance, that many issues are currently being contested at C.B.C., as they are in other schools. Such issues include conceptions of school effectiveness, the cultural, religious and educational purposes of the school, the status of knowledge and its management, authority relationships and social control. The monograph also attempts to illustrate something of the human essence of organisational life in schools that is overlooked, for instance, in school effectiveness studies. Overall, the case illustrates the manner in which forces for both continuity and change are negotiated and dealt with at C.B.C. The reproduction or transformation of C.B.C., or perhaps more accurately, its reproduction in some ways yet transformation in others, will be seen to depend upon the interaction of human actors in a specific social context as they collectively negotiate or contest important educational resources such as culture, knowledge and power. Although C.B.C. is a Catholic independent school, it is, like all schools, a cultural site. Issues being confronted there are also contested, in different forms and different circumstances, in other schools.

The research upon which this monograph is based was conducted mainly in 1982. For six weeks during June and July of that year Angus was joined at C.B.C. by three other researchers: Louis Smith, of Washington University, St. Louis; and Richard Bates and Peter Watkins of Deakin University. All of the researchers had withdrawn from C.B.C. by the end of 1982. The discussion, therefore, examines the emergence in time, up to that point, of the ongoing process of reproduction and transformation at C.B.C. The process has continued, of course, since then.

The monograph opens with four papers that were written by Smith, Angus, Watkins and Bates at the end of 1982. The papers are reproduced here to give readers some sense of the participants' perspectives of the flavour of the particular school in which they live and work. Although the ethnographic descriptions are relatively brief, they afford some valuable insights and information which will enable readers to appraise more critically the extensive interpretation of the C.B.C. situation which follows the readings.

The prolonged discussion begins with a summary of the research and then discusses in detail several themes that emerge from the ethnography. These themes – reproduction and transformation, C.B.C. and access to the job market, C.B.C. and the competitive academic curriculum, individual autonomy and institutional control, and uncertainty and crisis at C.B.C. – are apparent in the readings which follow.

Readings



1 Christian Brothers College: A view from overseas

Louis M. Smith
Washington University, St. Louis

Methods and Procedures

Before arriving in Australia I developed a two page statement of what I thought we would be about. This is consistent with our earlier projects and practices and Malinowski's (1922) oft-cited concept of foreshadowed problems. It reflects the historian Hexter's (1971) concept of 'the other record'. It provides a gyroscopic function when one is overwhelmed by the complexity of particulars while in the middle of the project, i.e. 'What am I doing here anyway?'

The total time allocated for the project was six weeks, a much too short an interval. In effect I was trying out an extension of a comment by Jacquie Hill and the CSSE project (Stake & Easley 1977)—is it personally possible, can I do a short term ethnography?

The resources were broader than a personal effort; we had a unique combination of four people. Richard Bates had initiated the project, and brought a theoretical perspective from the new sociology, neo-Marxism and critical theory. Lawrie Angus has taught social studies and English in the school; currently is half time on the school faculty. He was educated in a Brothers' school in South Australia. Peter Watkins has taught a number of years in a State Secondary school, been intensively involved in such administrative tasks as timetabling, and is married to a Catholic.

The major methods of generating data remained similar to ones we had used before:

- Direct observations of ongoing events
- Open ended interviews with participants
- Document collection
- Inside/outside relationship.

Such an approach allows one to synthesise many of the major dichotomies in perspective within social science: historical vs contemporaneous, internal/phenomenological vs external/behavioural, structural vs processual, experience-near vs experience-distant concepts, focal vs contextual events.

'Sunday summaries' labels an activity which proved very helpful for me. Each week-end I'd ask myself what have I learned about C.B.C. this week. These seemed a blend of important stories, interpretive asides, and central conceptualisations. They provided guidance on what had been done and gave leads on what needed to be done. Research staff meetings each week kept building mutual understandings, kept fostering data sharing and idea trading.

It seems appropriate to comment that I spent a full period and sometimes two or more periods observing in classes of about 1/5 of the faculty, had intensive post interviews with most of these, conversations of varied length with most of the

rest of the faculty, and had brief introductions to a number of others at different times. The research team interviewed almost 2/3 of the faculty. I also spent nearly two full days 'shadowing' the headmaster: one of these days was mostly internal to the school; the second was mostly external, in meetings with Headmasters of Catholic Independent Schools and with Headmasters and Headmistresses of Independent Schools throughout the State.

The variety of documents we had access to seemed like a tidal wave. In comments to several staff I indicated a strategy which at home we call 'inundating visitors with paper'. When used as a strategy, this has all kinds of functions and dysfunctions. This time we found ourselves swimming desperately to keep from drowning.

The 'results' of our research come together in a final report. In most of our efforts we have accented the careful telling of veridical vignettes, stories and narratives, items that tend to be less interpretive and about which considerable agreement among participants is possible. The actors should agree, 'Yes, that's essentially what happened' or 'Yes, that's what I said or he said'. In addition, we have moved toward more generalisable meanings, ideas and interpretations. Sometimes these are reasonably close to the participants' world, and often in their own words; other times they are more distant and out of the world of the theorist—be he or she behaviourist, structural-functionalist, symbolic interactionist, or radical critic.

Images and interpretations: the religious ethos

As a non-Catholic and only casual visitor to parochial schools in America, I was overwhelmed by the religious ambience of the school. The prayers at the beginning of most classes, the religious statues, pictures and symbols, and the formal religious classes seemed everywhere. The Brothers, their community, their participation in all parts of the curiculum and in all kinds of activities provided a presence throughout the school. Visits by local priests and priests from elsewhere in Australia and around the world extended that feeling of omnipresence.

The impact of this on the boys seemed quite variable. On the negative side two clusters of observations are germane. At times the participation in activities such as the before class prayers seemed perfunctory and with little involvement and meaning. Second, some of the comments of the boys, and usually the older ones, in various informal conversations carried the flavor of 'I go to mass because my mum makes me'. On the positive side, the involvement of the primary boys in the Reconciliation experience, the close participation of the parents, and the preparation by the teachers seemed as vital and meaningful as any religious ceremony could be.

Images and interpretations: faculty heterogenity

The single stereotype I brought with me pictured C.B.C. as an homogeneous faculty composed primarily of teaching Brothers. The reality accents a mix of homogoneity and heterogeneity—for example, most (but *not* all) of the faculty are Catholic. But only about 20% are Brothers. It *is* a Brothers' school, but in a fundamental sense it is not.

I was also surprised at the international flavor of the faculty which seems to bring major and important alternative perspectives on the nature of education. Again the group of old boys from C.B.C. and other Brothers' schools bring a mix of attitudes to their current role as teachers. As lay teachers some hope to change and 'improve' upon the education offered by Brothers' schools in earlier years.

Diversity in classroom organisation

A number of items require comment here, but time permits a mere introduction. First, I was struck by the diversity of pedagogical styles. While text books of multiple sorts were quite prevalent with their correlated assign/study/recite procedures, other forms appeared across subject areas and grade levels. Informal discussions (e.g. current events, religion), project methods (in social studies), laboratory experiments and demonstrations (in science) and problems (also in science) appeared. As the variation in those methods implies, the sources of ideas and data came from texts, varied printed materials (literary critics' statements, other manuals and references etc.), student generated data (from personal experience, interviews and work experiences), and varied experiences of the teachers. This breadth seems an important part of the intellectual life of the school.

Class size was quite variable. Some classes as small as 7 or 8 in advanced courses. Others as large as 37 or 38 in the primary and early years of secondary (Year 7 and Year 8). Almost every Brother talked of earlier years and other schools where they taught groups of 80 or 90. Keep the youngsters 'writing, writing, writing' was the technique voiced by one; corporal punishment was echoed by another. But that was of another era.

Discipline, in most classes, was no problem. 'The kids are a piece of cake' were the words of one experienced staff member who had taught in a number of schools. Most teachers are well in charge, again with varied styles. The punitiveness sometimes alleged to be a part of Brothers' schools was not here. The biggest problems lay with teachers new to this school and particularly those new to the profession. Beginning teachers here as elsewhere (and with every profession) have problems learning the mix of craft and professional skills required to sustain their activities.

The nature of knowledge taught and learned in the school seemed to have considerable variety also. In some classes it seemed quite technical. In a literature class the critics had these contrasting things to say about *MacBeth* or *Hucklebury Finn*. Or in science the formula for this electrical process or that chemical process is this and that. Or in P.E., football kicks are categorised in three ways (torpedo, drop-punt and drop-kick) and field hockey has several kinds of passes and stick movements. Problem skills, lab skills, sport skills are linked with such knowledge. In other classes, and across different subjects and grade levels, the knowledge seems more common sense and part of the folk lore of living in Australia (its climate, flora and fauna), in the Australian sport culure (tennis at Wimbledon and soccer in Madrid), and living as a Catholic (biblical stories and phrases such as 'doubting Thomas'). And in some instances, a mix occurred of the technical with the quite personal as in primary human relations/sex education classes where discussion and talk included: love, affection, sperm, ova, fertilisation, embryos, uteruses, penises, erections, and wet dreams.

Influences such as the nature and importance of H.S.C. exams seem to be very important in the upper grades. The curriculum in some classes seems to be almost isomorphic with the demands of H.S.C. Some staff seem pleased with this, others feel constrained. Most staff see parents and students as being highly concerned and demanding of careful preparation for the exams.

One of my summary impressions is that each teacher takes considerable personal and professional responsibility for deciding what and how he or she will teach. Many staff seem to like and prefer minimal guidelines. Others seem to want more common views of scope and sequence of curriculum. In recent years some efforts occurred in literature to put order into which novel or plays would be taught in which years. C.B.C.'s intellectual identity seems to have grown more like 'Topsy' than by planned consensus building.

Christian Brothers College as an organisation

But teachers and classrooms reside in larger units and contexts. C.B.C. does have an organisational structure that presents a set of 'givens', opportunities that are open and constraints that limit. This social reality is usually defined outside the give and take individual teachers have with their students. Some of our observations and conversations indicate that this organisational level is important generally in schooling and that C.B.C. has some interestingly different aspects from other schools we have studied. While the school has an identity, it, too, is part of several larger or broader contexts which provide a new level of 'givens'. These social realities, in turn, are contested, negotiated, or enacted by another set of actors, one step further removed from the teachers and the pupils. Often a principal or headmaster 'represents' his school in the discussions and debates which frequently accompany this definition of the reality, the rules of the game, or the new givens. C.B.C. as a Catholic school, as a Christian Brothers' school, and as an Independent school has some fascinating aspects to it as a case study.

The position and role of the headmaster

A few short sentences capture with difficulty the headmaster and his perspective. He reminds me of Superintendent George in one of our earlier studies. He sees himself as a realist. He's fiscally conservative, believes he's right and is proud of the stance and the benefits it has brought to the school. From his point of view he tries to 'conserve and preserve, but move ahead' and mediate among such influences as the Provincial, the parents and the staff. He links this with the Brothers' historical mission of improving, through education, the social and economic position of Catholic boys in Australian society. They need basic education in literacy and numeracy. They need simple social skills and attitudes in courtesy, politeness, promptness, obedience, and responsibility. They need experiences essential to their movement into various levels of the economic system of Newburyport specifically and Australia more generally. The business metaphor runs through his thinking about school organisation and school purposes.

Educationally, he's concerned about the range of ability and interests in the population of boys who make up the school's enrolment. The large majority will move through three major channels—some to University; some into local white collar jobs in banks, offices, and shops; and some into trades. The school curriculum must serve this range. H.S.C. courses are offered even with small enrolments in some years. New programs—transition class and careers—are supported which facilitate groups with other interests and abilities.

Administratively, he sees himself as a practical man of action. A doer, mover, and stirrer, a person who gets things done. A maker of trouble for those who prefer to sit on their back-sides. In my experience, conflict is often a consequence of such an orientation.

His plans for the school, in his eyes, have been conditioned by the situation at the school when he arrived three years ago. This sets the priorities for him. He feels he's well into the agenda. The deficit has been erased. Roofs have been repaired. Buildings and grounds are under constant surveillance and the appearance of the school has improved from the minor litter on the grounds to the general maintenance of the classrooms, gardens and ovals. He works hard at this with the staff who are directly involved. The solvency of the school means that plans to refurbish the old hall are underway. The Provincial has approved plans for the $200,000 task. A bank loan for $50,000 of the total had been secured. That seems a remarkable achievement in less than three years. Like most such achievements, it has had its costs.

Approval for an additional stream of youngsters at Year 7 has been given. This meets the growing parental pressure for increased secondary enrolments. It lays the base for later building of a three storey addition for additional science rooms, for expanded library space, and for a common room for senior boys. The final phase of his plans calls for a combination gymnasium/auditorium building, but that is some years away.

To be correlated with these next phases of building and enrolment were general initiatives in curriculum and instruction. In the eyes of some of the faculty, but not all, these problems are seen as much more serious and pressing, and ones that should have taken precedence over some of the building issues. For this group, concerns exist as to the new headmaster and whether he'll be a 'curriculum' man and whether he'll be more responsive to the educational issues of the faculty. Little clarity exists in the minds of most of the faculty as to how the Provincial and his council of consultors makes such a decision. At this point we are back to our prior discussions of 'context', 'nested systems', and 'givens' as social reality.

Some theoretical sketches

One of the most frustrating parts of such a short term case study as this one concerns the intellectual or theoretical agenda. Several large domains of current educational thought had been caught in such labels as 'cultural reproduction' and 'deprivatisation' in the early research team discussions. Coming to some clarity on such ideas and how they aid in understanding issues in schooling had been a major hope of mine. Before leaving St. Louis, I began reading Wakefield's book on the *English Public School* and thinking through some of the items presented in Simon Raven's *Alms for Oblivion*, a ten novel series of the lives of upper middle and upperclass Englishmen who came of age after World War II. The public school experiences flowed throughout the ten books. At a 'common sense level' this seemed like a place to begin unpacking the term 'cultural reproduction'. Later I would move on to the more recent technical accounts (e.g. Bourdieu & Passeron 1977; Giroux 1981). Then my hope was to try the ideas out on the kinds of data and stories we had developed at C.B.C. Then, if necessary, we could go back to C.B.C. for further data to clarify the actual matters still in dispute. Finally, the ideas could be integrated into our evolving general point of view.

A second set of theoretical issues germane to C.B.C. and education in Australia has been called 'deprivatisation' by Erickson and Nault (1980). I had been reading their work for other reasons and found in initial discussion with Richard Bates that federal and state funding of private independent schools, including Catholic schools, began in the last decade or so in Australia and is an important political/educational issue. C.B.C. seemed a place to continue thinking through the issues.

What should have also been obvious before, but I made no note of it in my prior notes, was the possibility of integrating the deprivatisation issues with Etzioni's (1968) more general theory of organisations. He builds a typology of organisations around the categories of 'normative', 'remunerative' and 'co-ercive' and he argues that these major structural differences have impact through all other aspects of the organisation. Historically C.B.C. has been a normative organisation, government monies seem to be making it a remunerative organisation. In a sense our case study could become a beautiful instance for criticising, clarifying, and developing this set of ideas. Presumably also this could make a major contribution toward examining, if not synthesising into traditional organisational literature, concepts such as cultural reproduction which we have already mentioned. Similarly, the movement of youngsters through the school and into jobs and the economic world, which is essentially a remuneration system, to stay with Etzioni, should illuminate

other recent theoretical positions such as corespondence theory. All this is the kind of large intellectual agenda which is the forte of ethnographic case study research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). But that's an agenda for the future.

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2 Continuity and Change in the Brothers' Educational Mission

Lawrence Angus

Deakin University

Introduction

Approximately one fifth of Australia's school children attend Catholic schools. In spite of this, there has been a surprising dearth of investigation into such schools.

This paper represents an exploratory foray into data generated during an intensive ethnographic study at one Catholic primary and secondary boys school, C.B.C., Newburyport. The focus here is upon the perceptions of the Christian Brothers who conduct the school and who, in a series of interviews, are able to provide many insights into the problematic nature of Catholic education and their part in it. Interview data is supplemented by observation and participant observation of the lived experience of a host of situations within the school. Much of the data generated bears upon the crucial question of the changing nature of C.B.C., Newburyport, as a Christian Brothers' school.

The Brothers' Mission

One area of agreement amongst the nine teaching brothers at C.B.C. is that the Christian Brothers in Australia have been particularly successful at educating working class boys for placement in middle class careers. In the first half of the twentieth century this was considered to be of crucial importance in 'establishing a Catholic community that could stand on its own feet in all sorts of areas of society' to the point where 'these days, now, you have got people with Catholic background leaders in these groups'.

The rationale behind the Brothers' determined policy to educate for upward social mobility has several dimensions—the most fundamental being that such concern for working class boys is seen as a direct link with the aim of the founder of the order, Br. Edmund Rice, to assist the needy. In addition, tales of the prejudice that Catholics suffered in employment prior to 1950 made examination success and the resultant scholarships or public service entrance especially important. Moreover, as Brother Graham recalls:

> It was an aim that was being tackled by the Archbishop and the Brothers were just working under his directions. It was also to enable Catholics to move into positions of influence ... so that the message of Jesus might be heard in those areas.

All of the brothers at C.B.C. feel some pride or satisfaction in the role that Brothers have played in the social advancement of Catholics. They agree with Brother O'Hara, a veteran of forty-five years teaching in Brothers' schools, that:

> ... there are Catholic people now in good positions ... and in their day, without the Brothers' schools, they would not have had that opportunity. They

may have had the ability but not the opportunity to get where they are today. And when you look at the founder starting [in 19th century Ireland] - there were so many poor and they couldn't get jobs and there was no education for them. So he did what he could then to help the poor to sort of get some status.

Such references to the founder occur often in interviews with the brothers. Yet some amongst them wonder whether the original mission of Edmund Rice is now being pursued as rigorously as it should be. They speculate about ways in which the founder's mission of assisting the needy through education could be more appropriately applied. Brother Sterling, indeed, wonders whether the current apostolate has diverged from the founder's intention in that 'needy' boys should be a more conspicuous target of the Brothers' educational enterprise:

> I would wonder . . . if Edmund Rice came to Australia where would he go? . . . He went to the slums outside Waterford. What we ought to be doing is heading towards the housing commission estates.

This opinion does not indicate that Brother Sterling disapproves of the Brothers' work to date—merely that he sees a need for change now that one task has been completed.

Question:	Brothers . . . seem to think that they have done a good job in the area of educating the working class Catholics and kind of raising the social standing of Catholics in the community. Would you agree with that?
Br. Sterling:	Yes, but we have not taken the next move.
Question:	Which is?
Br. Sterling:	The next move is—having in a certain area lifted a certain class to a certain level - do we stay with that upper level or do we head to the poorer suburbs and do the same trick over again?

In the one telling comment, Brother Sterling sums up his view that the Brothers' mission has been diverted from what it once was and also indicates the nature of his own motivation to commit his life to a teaching vocation:

> . . . I didn't enjoy teaching rich people - otherwise I would have joined the Jesuits.

Interestingly, Br. Sterling has another reason for preferring that the Brothers withdraw from many of their established schools like C.B.C. and concentrate their resources in areas of underprivilege. He, with most of his colleagues, feels that one reason for the massive decline in entrants to the order, to the point where the Novitiate is virtually empty, lies in the excessive materialism of middle class society. Products of the economically underprivileged suburbs of metropolis may, he believes, provide a richer harvest of vocations to ensure the continuation of the Brothers' work.

Of course, the lack of vocations to the Brothers since about 1960 and the many defections from the order since that time have created a crisis of personnel which is forcing a reappraisal of the role of the remaining Brothers. It is not much of an oversimplification to suggest that the Brothers at C.B.C. are split fairly evenly into two groups. One would prefer the Brothers to withdraw from many of their schools into a small number of schools staffed mainly by brothers. The other believes that substantial change within the Brothers' order and their schools is essential if the Brothers are to preserve any mission whatsoever. Indications are that, in the broad scheme of things, the latter group is now in the ascendency within the order. Brother Dowsett is encouraged by the decision of the Council of a

neighbouring Province (state) to allow a small team of brothers to conduct emergency social work in the depressed areas of the capital city. He foresees that such work will be attractive to a number of younger brothers, including himself. The headmaster of C.B.C., Brother Carter, takes pride in the missions that the Brothers have established outside Australia, in Fiji and New Guinea, and foresees the possibility of the Christian Brothers 'lifting the people in those countries the way we have done here'. Brother Gil O'Hara takes heart from the appointment, in another Province, of a lay deputy principal for one of the Brothers' prestigious schools and sees this as indicating an end to the Brothers' maintainance of minority control in their schools. Many of his colleagues agree with him that lay teachers, provided they are committed Catholics, provide the only hope for the continuation of their schools even though they will inevitably become very different places. Gil is annoyed by those brothers who will not accept the need for such change:

Question: How does [a majority of lay teachers] change what the Brothers will do?

Br. O'Hara: Some have accepted this fairly well and others have found it difficult to take. Those who find it very hard to take, I think, are very unrealistic in the times that we live—and I think they are also unrealistic looking back . . . They think of the 'good old days', which really gets me up the wall because they never existed—and I can't see why they can't see they didn't exist. I know what they mean—but there were never any good old days. Good old days of teaching 72 kids all day!

Yet some brothers really do look back fondly to days of heavy work loads and huge classes. At least, then, they were teaching in schools that could be literally called 'Brothers' schools':

Br. Bourke: I started teaching in 1932 and until . . . 1961 I had not taught in any school in which there had been more than one lay teacher. That was from '32 to '61!

In those days each brother taught his own class for most of the school day and many received great satisfaction from the ongoing contact with pupils that, in spite of large classes and rigid discipline, such an arrangement facilitated:

Br. Graham: Those kids were [a brother's] family, and they are his job, they are his recreation, they are everything. And that is why, whether they like it or not, they are going to get taught!

For these brothers, and others, the traditional educational enterprise of the Christian Brothers was part of their golden era. They recall days of large classes, heavy workloads and extra-curricular duties with satisfaction. Those were days of certainty for the order, and of a determined unity of purpose. Strong discipline and sound Irish Catholic values were inculcated into generations of Australian Catholic boys as they were instructed for examination success and upward social mobility. But a crisis of numbers in the order, an influx of lay teachers and a changing world has shattered the certainty that once characterised the mission of the Christian Brothers.

C.B.C. Newburyport: A Brothers' School

The Christian Brothers have had a long association with the provincial city of Newburyport. Like Brothers' schools everywhere, C.B.C. quickly established a reputation for firm discipline and sound results in public examinations.

Cameron Pont, himself a Christian Brother for over twenty years, and now fifteen years a lay teacher at C.B.C., is pleased about aspects of the reputation C.B.C. has gained:

> Question: [Catholic traditions at C.B.C.] go back a long way do they?
> Cameron Pont: Yes. I think they would go back a very long way. I think that C.B.C. was established in 1932 and an academic tradition had begun to be established even in those first years and people were proud of the fact . . . The Newburyport [Catholic] community was keen to have Catholic people in situations in the town—in influential situations in the town.

According to Brother Bourke, who as a young religious was part of the founding of C.B.C., Newburyport Catholics have been extremely loyal to the school:

> The Brothers have been in Newburyport for a long time and there are a tremendous number of old Catholic families [who] went to the Brothers' school and that was the only school they ever thought of.

The image of C.B.C. that parents are perceived to support was established in those days when the school was staffed almost entirely by brothers. Although only twenty percent of the teaching staff are now brothers, C.B.C. is still considered to be a 'Brothers' school'. Brother Graham explains his understanding of that phrase:

> I would understand [a Brothers' school], these days, as a school that is being run according to the traditions of the Christian Brothers. That school is being run by the Brothers and by like-minded lay teachers—and that word 'like-minded' is very significant . . . We have traditionally been regarded at our schools as being authoritarian . . . I would be a little disappointed if some people didn't regard our school system as authoritarian—because in my mind that would mean a lack of discipline.

The like-minded lay teachers whom Brother Graham would like to see maintain the traditions of C.B.C. might be in short supply. In fact, the data indicate that most of the lay teachers have, at best, an ambivalent view of the Brothers' traditions, especially those related to rigid physical discipline and narrowly defined curriculum, and only partly share their once stable value system. Moreover, a shift from many of the traditional values on the part of a number of brothers is indicated by the data. This shift has implications for the future of the Brothers' educational mission.

Brother Ian Dowsett, for instance, is one of the brothers who feels that their educational mission requires a reassessment of priorities:

> I sort of see the tradition of the brothers to basically be able to provide some sort of help and support, particularly in education, for those who are needy . . . I think our work in the school here, one of our fundamental concerns, has got to be those kids who are in some sort of special need.

This consideration is the basis of the call by some brothers at C.B.C. for a reassessment of financial priorities to allow for the establishment of an adequate remedial program for secondary students with special intellectual needs.

Brother Bourke, Brother Graham and others resent somewhat that lay teachers are trained as subject specialists and that their majority numbers at schools like C.B.C. have necessitated a school organisation which precludes the traditional arrangement of each brother being responsible for his own class. This is an area of concern for these brothers for several reasons. One is that they believe that standards of discipline have declined because teachers now do not spend enough time with each class to get to know them well and control them properly.

Another is that they believe that boys are no longer sufficiently exposed to 'Brothers' influence'. Understandably, Brothers holding these attitudes tend to have minimal contact with lay teachers. Perhaps it is by coincidence that the group of brothers associated with these views are clustered together in the year 9 and 10 area of the school—a fact which some other brothers find disappointing and even embarrassing:

> Br. Sterling: I was so shocked and staggered at the lack of initiative around Year 10 that I couldn't take it.
>
> Question: Is that the area most dominated by brothers . . .?
>
> Br. Sterling: That is why I jumped out—because I found that I was so frustrated. Perhaps this would be people who did not want to rock the boat—hence you do nothing . . . And perhaps you might also find people that have got such a narrow outlook on things and they will not discuss things.

Without doubt, the influence of lay teachers and the decreased and aging membership of the Christian Brothers is gradually changing C.B.C. and all Brothers' schools. The first lay teachers at C.B.C. were in the primary school, then several ex-brothers were recruited in the secondary school. Gradually more lay teachers were needed as the number of brothers dwindled and increased federal monies allowed reduction of class sizes. The lay teachers only partially share the value system which was formerly perpetuated in the Brothers' training institutions. The stability and predictability of the traditional Brothers' school which won the allegiance of an earlier generation of Newburyport Catholics has thus become characterised by a degree of uncertainty which is yet to be resolved.

Conclusion: theoretical considerations

Analysis of the data used here is far from complete, yet clearly a number of theoretical perspectives may be advanced by the research or may be useful in illuminating the considerable data.

That part of the Brothers' mission which involved education for social mobility indicates that perhaps the most promising area of literature to mind, and the one which initially underpinned the research, is that related to cultural and economic reproduction (Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu & Passeron 1977; Bowles & Gintis 1976)—particularly more recent developments in the literature which recognise the importance of contestation and contradiction (Giroux 1981). Little of this literature, or any other, however, speaks directly to the important issue of religious reproduction which is, of course, fundamental to a Christian Brothers' school.

Because C.B.C. serves a sector characterised by shifting values, and because the value structure of the personnel within the school is in a state of flux, the Meyer, Scott & Deal (1980) representation of schools as 'institutional organisations' may provide a useful basis for analysis of the cultural linkages (Bates 1981) between C.B.C. personnel, the pupils, and the Newburyport Catholic community. Overall, such analysis should ultimately begin to shed light upon the increasingly intriguing and contested image of a Catholic school in the process of change and adjustment.

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3 Cultural reproduction of the labour market: Work experience at C.B.C.

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Introduction

While certain elements of Catholicism may seem to be in a state of flux one of the striking characteristics of C.B.C. is the strength and cohesiveness of the school and its clientele. There is an all but unanimous consensus that the function of the school is to maintain and reproduce a faithful Catholic presence in a hostile world. Thus there is a whole status culture to be defended consisting of cultural traits, dispositions and conventions. The reproduction of this culture by C.B.C. was seen as crucial to the struggle for status and prestige in the socio-cultural system of Newburyport. The complex interplay of individual, school, Catholic and work cultures within the city is the topic of this paper. The explanation of the interpretation of these cultures is undertaken in terms of the theoretical perspectives provided by Bourdieu (1977), Bourdieu & Passeron (1977) and Collins (1977, 1979).

Cultural dispositions and work

In the Weberian sense the culture of status groups reflects the personal ties and common sense of being that is based on shared views of the world (Weber, 1968). In this respect this paper follows the example of Collins (1977, 1979) in using the terms status group and class as interchangeable concepts. Each status group has individual cultural predilections and these peculiar traits and dispositions allow the group to utilise scarce cultural resources.

Non cognitive skills, which these cultural traits largely form, have lately been seen to be significant in facilitating entry into the workforce. Recent studies of recruitment into the world of work have emphasised the importance of these cultural attributes (Bowles & Gintis 1976, 1981; Clegg & Dunkerley 1980; Jencks 1979; Salaman 1979; Watkins 1980). For the entry into work organisations is a point where there is a crucial intersection between status group, school and labour market, which mediates the reproduction of that status group.

At C.B.C. the family and school values of discipline, self control and obedience find themselves in harmony with each other and with the demands of local employers.

This compatibility of family, school and work culture is internalised by both teachers and students. Indeed, students who sometimes find the discipline hard to take rationalise that it will eventually give them an advantage in entering the job market. Brother Ernest, for example, suggested that the values of obedience and hard work were associated with the Brothers' schools. Hard work and discipline in turn were related to the socio-economic advantage which he saw Christian Brothers' schools as conferring upon their clients. This feeling was also supported by Jim

Karn, the transition co-ordinator, who argued that while youth unemployment in Newburyport was running at 25% only two or three students from last year's exit group at C.B.C. had not got jobs.

The cultural traits of discipline and obedience stressed in Catholic families and schools were thought to be major factors in C.B.C. students' successful entry into the labour market. As several personnel officers had told Jim on visits during work-experience:

> They are prepared to take our kids because they believe our kids are conditioned to a little bit of discipline, they are used to a uniform, they are used to getting their hair cut, all these fairly bloody superficial reasons if you like, if you really want to look at them. But our kids are getting jobs like that in preference to perhaps kids at the tech. So the skills that the kids at the techs have got from form one don't seem relevant any more according to the big companies.

Salaman (1979), in a study of the recruitment procedures of Ford, points out that the selectors are looking for candidates who show an ability to internalise the values and attitudes the company stresses. Particularly, they seek recruits who show a quality of self-control and compatability with organisation policy and culture. Thus the Ford managers studied by Salaman stress:

> . . . the importance of the candidate's knowledge of and sympathy with, the values and beliefs current within the organisation, and which lie behind organisational events and decisions. Their scrutiny of candidates is largely a search for appropriate attitudes and self conception.
>
> (Salaman 1979, p. 193)

Thus the local attitude is closely in tune with overseas experience. For instance, with the inflation of academic credentials (Collins 1979) it would appear that employers are increasingly relying on non-cognitive credentials to allow them to screen prospective employees and to choose recruits whose values and dispositions are compatible with their own. Consequently, in Victoria educational entry requirements for apprenticeship are being scrapped as many employers see the requirements as irrelevant (*Age*, 11/6/82, p. 14). In this respect the students of C.B.C. seem to have an advantage over other students in Newburyport by having a cultural background which is compatible to the requirements of employers. But while they may avoid unemployment, the choices for work experience would seem to indicate that many will end up with jobs similar to those of their fathers.

Work-experience in Victoria and C.B.C.

Cultural reproduction is not a static process but evolves historically through the dialectical interplay between the internal culture of the status group and the external culture of society. In this section, then, the historical development of work-experience in Victoria will be discussed as the socio-historical context for the introduction of work experience at C.B.C.

In Victoria in 1970 there were nine schools engaging in work-experience programs of some kind. However by 1974, 84 schools in Victoria had implemented work-experience programs (Cole 1979, p. 33). In 1974, the Education (Work-Experience) Act was passed legalising and formalising the programs. Such official encouragement, coupled with increasingly poor economic and employment opportunities, brought about a leap in schools participating in the scheme. By 1976 the number of schools engaging in work-experience programs had increased to 240. This further increased by 1979 when 524 schools engaged in work-experience during the school year. Over 80% of the schools were state run schools; less than 20% were private schools (*Advise*, June 1980, p. 3).

The students' remuneration for the period of work-experience can range from nothing for a governmental or local service organisation to fifty dollars or more a week. Private employers must pay a minimum wage of $3 per day. This is mainly to satisfy the requirements for Workers' Compensation and a Workers' Compensation form has to be completed for each student and signed by the principal. To satisfy Workers' Compensation requirements when working for a service organisation the students agree to donate any payment back to the organisation.

The rationale behind the implementation of work-experience schemes has had diverse ideological backgrounds. Firstly, during periods of high and persistent youth unemployment such schemes are seen by politicians, parents and employers as likely correctors of the apparent mismatch between education and work. Secondly, for radical educators work-experience was initially seen as a form of praxis; of bringing education and productive labour into close harmony (Freire, 1978). Thirdly, work-experience appeals to those members of society who see such schemes as a means not only to socialise the young into the workplace but also to inculcate the dominant ideology of the private enterprise system into the students (Marland 1974).

At C.B.C. work-experience has been implemented only very recently. As Jim Karn put it:

> Work-experience was introduced in 1980. It came in just as an extra program for the commerce area. The commerce area adopted it and tried to get the kids out.

The commerce teachers felt that many students were unaware of the 'real' world of business. This had come about because many of the staff at C.B.C. were 'either brothers, ex-brothers or ex-priests' who knew little of the demands and complexity of the 'normal' industrial world. Jim's aim was:

> primarily to expose the kids to the work environment and to, as I see it anyway, what we are supposed to be preparing for. If you like, just what [work] was about.
>
> My initial basic aim was simply to expose them and get them out of the school situation and make them, say, get up at 7.30 and make them turn up every day just simply [to] expose them to any environment whatever.

In this approach to the students' education Jim felt that they should be thrust even into the most alienated and dehumanised situations to show them what the 'real' world is like. For:

> they simply don't know what the factory floor involves . . . There is simply the dehumanising or the noise or whatever. That really must have had a tremendous effect on them and only two when they came back said they would go for it. Now . . . my idea of that, is that most of those kids would not work on the assembly line anyway, they would be in different areas. But I really like to shock kids or just get them to realise what it is really about.

The initial numbers of students going out on work-experience was small. In 1981 twenty-five students went into the work environment for two weeks of the second term. However, in 1982 this had quickly expanded to the entire year 11 group of 115 students. The change was facilitated by the arrival at the school of an 'Old Boy' Bruce Smith, who had been involved in work-experience at a state high school in the Latrobe Valley since 1975. He had found that in the 'Valley' it was seen as an important recruiting device as:

> certain employers would try 3 or 4 kids during the year and at the end of the year they would make a decision on who they would employ. It also . . . saved them time and money in interviewing people.

Bruce's aims for C.B.C. were much the same as they had in the 'Valley':

> to get the students aware of the work situation, the getting up early, the responding to bosses, doing tasks, showing initiative. Secondly as a source of employment basically ... I always felt [as a student at C.B.C.] that a lot of the stuff we were taught, was irrelevant because the type of kids that are coming aren't necessarily from the academic background. [On the forms returned] the average [parent's] occupation was in the trades business and the trade working class. [Consequently] when the kids sat down and filled out their preferences [for work-experience] of the 115 that went out there were 61 of them with trade orientated ambitions.

In his attitude towards the remuneration that the students received from their work-experience, Bruce took the hard line of the 'real' world. In some schools slightly radical work-experience co-ordinators take a more egalitarian approach to the money earned. They collect the money and redistribute it so that all students obtain an equal amount. Bruce had found that in the 'Valley':

> the tech. school did it where they reallocated it. [But] you would have to be an idiot kid to tell you got $80 or $100 bucks, wouldn't you. I would be keeping it. That is encouraging socialism where the harder some guy works and gets paid and he distributes it to some idiot who doesn't work well.

The aims of work-experience reflect a liberal technocratic-meritocratic view of schooling and work (Bowles & Gintis 1976, p. 23). These are mainly concerned with matching the attitudes and skills demanded in the workplace with those being produced by the school. The economic and political systems are taken as given and beyond the range of educational questioning or actions. Inequality of power, status and wealth are taken as natural consequences reflecting the range of meritocratic skills in society. The job of work-experience is to allow the school-leavers to enter the workplace aware of the places they will occupy with 'realistic' aspirations which reflect their educational attainment.

Some thoughts on cultural reproduction and C.B.C.

Bourdieu perceived that with the development of capitalism, reproduction has become more dependent on cultural assets [illegible] cultural capital instead of inherited wealth. These cultural assets were also perceived as important by the Christian Brothers in their self appointed task of facilitating the entry of working class Catholics into the 'middle class' of Protestant society. Schools like C.B.C. therefore attempted to ensure that poor Catholics could overcome their lack of wealth and property by the acquisition of specific cultural assets.

In the recent development of capitalism, cultural assets which are in harmony with the operations of corporate enterprise have become increasingly important. This trend has become evident as the managerial personnel of firms increasingly come not from a controlling family but from a body of people endowed with the dispositions and characteristics compatible with the ideology of the firm (Bourdieu, Boltanski & Saint-Martin 1973, p. 66).

However, Bourdieu argues, in the quest for credentials the school alone seems capable of providing the skills such as manipulation of language, social dispositions and economic calculation demanded by the economic and symbolic markets. In this way the school functions as a means of symbolic domination. For:

> even when it does not manage to provide the opportunity for appropriating the dominant culture, it can at least inculcate recognition of the legitimacy of this

culture and of those who have the means of appropriating it. Symbolic domination accompanies and redoubles economic domination (Bourdieu & Boltanski 1978, p.217).

Because the domination is of an arbitrary culture, it results in a socialisation which is inherently a symbolic form of violence. For the socialisation process does violence to the reality of the basic power structure. Thus there is a 'misrecognition' of the educational process by both the teachers and the students. Through this mystification of the true nature of the taught culture, the resistance towards it is limited. Whilst those who inculcate the dominant culture 'live out their thought and practice in the illusion of freedom and universality' (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977, p.40).

When looking at C.B.C. a major thrust of the school's program is directed at reinforcing and inculcating the dispositions of discipline, respect for authority and self-control. These are major tenets of both Irish Catholicism and capitalism. For as Cameron Pont, a senior member of C.B.C., put it, apart from a Catholic education the major factor:

> . . . that attracts people to C.B.C. [is that they think], 'I will send them to the brothers and they will straighten them out'. They have been really brutal disciplinarians at times in their punishments. . . . Even enlightened people believed that discipline in that form was a good thing.

The cultural ethos of discipline, obedience, and docility is seen as important by both the family and the school. This ethos of relatively durable dispositions and modes of perception is termed by Bourdieu 'the habitus'. The habitus provides students:

> . . . not so much with particular and particularised schemes of thought as with that general disposition which engenders particular schemes which may then be applied in different domains of thought and action.
>
> (Bourdieu 1971, p.184)

So in this way the cultural environment of C.B.C. differs from that which other classes or status groups experience in schools in Newburyport. For as the environments for different classes differ so each class has a different habitus. As Di Maggio illustrates, the habitus brings about a 'unique integration, dominated by the earliest experiences statistically common to members of the same class' (1979, p.1464). Thus, through the workings of habitus, the particular cultural practices of individuals from a particular status group or class appear 'natural' and 'normal', perhaps even 'inevitable'. But through this process there is little awareness of how these practices react and are modified by other practices or are themselves limited. Nevertheless there is a dialectic relationship between the individual, group and society. As Bourdieu puts it:

> the habitus acquired in the family underlies the structuring of school experiences . . . and the habitus transformed by schooling, itself diversified, in turn underlies the structuring of all subsequent experiences [e.g. the reception and assimilation of the messages of the culture industry or work experience], and so on, from restructuring to restructuring.
>
> (Bourdieu 1977, p.87)

The study of C.B.C. reflects the dynamic, dialectical interplay of culture. Through both the internal culture of the group and the external culture of society, a dialectic evolves in which the individual is not only created by, but also creates and contributes to, the structures in which he/she exists. In a similar context Connell et al. argue:

the interactions among kids, parents and teachers are constantly being renegotiated and reconstructed, at times quite dramatically mutated, in crises of the pupil's school life.

(Connell et al. 1982, p. 188)

Conclusion

At C.B.C. a common cultural function was indicated where family, religion, school and work-experience cultural traits merged and coalesced. This involved the traits of discipline, self control, respect for authority and obedience. The discipline of the school is legitimated and substantiated by the 'reality' of the business world that students come into contact with during work-experience. Students have to be 'punctual'; 'obey orders'; 'put their hands up to get permission to leave the assembly line, to go to the toilet'. In this way their daily life experiences influence, interact with and renegotiate their life time patterns and expectations. For as Giddens argues, the structural relations that perpetuate stability or precipitate change in a society are at the same time both the 'medium and the outcome of the reproduction of social practices' (1979, p. 5). Thus reproduction occurs through the continual movement of students into complex organisational relationships and their interaction with them. For the individual in this way is engaged in an external-internal dialectic which reflects the interplay between his own cultural background, the culture of the school and workplace culture. Through this process it is the resultant cultural resources which the student acquires that play a vital role in the cultural reproduction process (Collins, 1979).

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4

Reproduction and contestation: Class, religion, gender and control at Christian Brothers College

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Introduction

For a decade now debate in the sociology of education has been dominated by arguments over the part played by education in the reproduction of social structures (Bowles & Gintis 1976) and cultural differences (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977). Recently the early accounts of these reproductive processes have come under attack for being too deterministic (Bates 1980) or failing to take note of the possibility or extent of contestation in schools (Giroux 1980). Other accounts have been criticised for their naive optimism regarding the possibilities of intervention and transformation (Young & Whitty 1977) and their underestimation of the dependence of eductional transformations on concomitant economic and social transformations (Halsey et al. 1980).

Most of these accounts of the processes of reproduction or transformation of social and cultural structures have been articulated at a macro-level, focusing on society-wide changes or processes. One of the problems of such analysis has been to relate such large scale explanations to the smaller scale explanations that both locate and illuminate the experience of particular communities and their schools. Such attempts as have been made display vividly the dangers of imposing pre-formed theoretical explanations on somewhat reluctant data (Sharp & Green 1975) and of extrapolating from possibly unrepresentative data to large scale explanations of social process (Willis 1977).

These reservations by no means condemn the works to which they refer. Rather they point to the substantial difficulties facing theorists and researchers interested in fundamental questions of social reproduction and transformation. These difficulties are both theoretical and empirical. The theoretical issues are largely those of relating macro to micro events and explanations, and of embracing rather than excluding the normative, evaluative elements of explantions, interpretation and action. The empirical issues are largely those of deciding what kinds of evidence count in attempting to deal with such theoretical problems; of whether large scale survey analysis excludes the thick description needed for adequate explanation or whether the abundant detail yielded by ethnographic techniques is bought at too high a cost in terms of generalisation. Each of these issues is spoken to in our attempt to construct a team ethnography of Christian Brothers College.

Theoretically, however, the issues of reproduction and contestation are spoken to by the historical/social characteristics of the school. For instance the school, along with most Christian Brothers schools has, historically, had a distinctive (working) class location. But rather than reproducing the working class culture of its clients the aim has been to transform the cultural identity of its pupils

to establish a Catholic middle class. Thus, as far as the wider social structure is concerned, elements of contestation and transformation are present and overshadow the elements of cultural reproduction.

The instruments of such transformation have, traditionally, however, been located within a school culture dominated by gender (an exclusively male staff and student population) religion (an explicitly conservative Catholic theology and order) and control (a strict discipline emphasising conformity and obedience). In these internal respects the cultural history of the Brothers' schools has been, until recently, one of reproduction rather than transformation.

Since the establishment of C.B.C. in 1932 a number of both internal and external factors have influenced the balance and outcomes of the attempts at reproduction, contestation and transformation. In particular these centre around four themes: those of class, religion, gender and control.

Class and C.B.C.

The explicit background of the establishment of C.B.C., as well as of other Catholic secondary schools was, as Brother Graham recalls, 'to enable Catholics to move into positions of influence', positions from which they were largely debarred in the early decades of the twentieth century in Australia by the almost exclusively Protestant nature of secondary education. The town's Catholic community therefore welcomed the establishment of C.B.C. as Cameron Pont points out:

> In those first years people were proud [of the school's establishment]. The community was keen to have Catholic people in influential situations in the town. One of the ways they could do that, of course, was by education.

The result of this emphasis on the class relocation of Catholics into the middle class was, of course, a determinedly academic emphasis. Cameron Pont again suggests that 'the whole school has been geared towards academic achievement'.

The success of C.B.C. on a local scale can be measured by the penetration of past pupils into the higher echelons of management and professions in the town. As one staff member put it, many current school leavers get jobs because of old boys who 'are 38 or 40, just rising to the top in their jobs as executives; others are in their 50s now so . . . they just look after the old school tie'. The existence of such a network of contacts in banks and insurance companies in the town was also observed by Lou Smith during his 'downtown' visits with the principal. The penetration of the local business community by C.B.C. old boys is exemplified by the current mayor of the town who wears his previous membership of C.B.C. publicly and proudly.

One of the problems facing C.B.C. is in fact a product of its very success, for, in creating a middle class Catholic population in the local community, it has assisted in the transfer of that earlier generation's children into the prestigious Protestant schools. These schools, having abandoned their exclusion of Catholics, now enrol, we are informed, some 10–15% of their students from the local Catholic community. The result for C.B.C. is that '10 or 12 years ago the people who came to this school were . . . fairly comfortable financially. There were solicitors and doctors. Now that population has changed [and] we are having the plumber and the plasterer, the carpenter and the craftsman . . . who form the bulk of the population of the school'. It might be said, therefore, that the school now caters for a fairly stable group of lower middle class families, having lost the upper, professional groups to the nationally oriented, prestigious Protestant schools.

At the same time C.B.C. appears to have drawn up the ladder as far as access by some groups within the local community are concerned. For instance, many of the academically less able are screened out through the use of the Test of

Learning Aptitude (A.C.E.R.). It also appears that the majority of the post-war European (rather than Anglo-Celtic) Catholic immigrant population is also screened out through a zoning restriction with the result that 'there is a much higher percentage of European children going to Vianney College than there would be here'.

As far as the class location of C.B.C. is concerned, therefore, it appears that the early commitment to contestation and transformation of the class location of the Catholic community has been, at least in part, successful and that the radical aspect of this school's mission has been itself transformed into a conservative, reproductive mission centred on the lower, middle class, Anglo-Celtic, Catholic community. Such a transformation leads some of the brothers to ask whether 'what we ought to be doing is heading towards the housing commission estates'.

Religion at C.B.C.

If the class location of C.B.C. was altered from one of contestation and transformation within the wider community to one of reproduction then the converse seems to apply to the internal reproduction of a religious culture. To be sure, the consensus is that 'parents send their boys here because they want them to have a good Catholic education'. But what constitutes a good Catholic education in the modern, post Vatican II world is a matter of debate. The reproduction of old style religion through catechism based rote-learning and drill in ritual responses backed up by threats of retribution ('Fear, fear in the sense that you have to do this, or you must do this, or else') appears to have given way to a degree of ambiguity and uncertainty. This is exhibited in two particular ways. Firstly, despite the obvious and distinctive (to a non-Catholic) symbols and rituals that permeate the school there seems to be little that can be readily identified as a focal point of the religious life of the school. As one lay teacher suggested, echoing the reports of several others:

> There really isn't much sign of it really. The chapel is used by a few boys at lunch time. They might go up and pay a visit. Every teacher is supposed to say a prayer at the start of the period but I don't know if that happens all the time . . . Other than that there is a statue or similar in every room [but] I don't think religion plays a very important part in the school although there is the underlying theme that that is what we are here for and that this is the difference between this school and a normal high school.

This is a matter of concern for some of the staff: 'We have tried for years to say that the chapel ought to be the focal point of the school and if people are going to pray . . . they ought to come to the chapel . . . There is nothing organised in the senior school where they come together as a community'.

Rather than the religious life being focused on the chapel and reproduced through the observances of the church's year, it seems that religion is diffused into the classroom and, in particular, the religious education classes. Here, there also seems to be a degree of ambiguity. For instance, the traditional form of religious education, 'learning definitions from books, catechism and that,' has been displaced by 'more of a discussion type approach . . . more on the decent human side of it'. This discussion approach is explained in that religious education 'is a really difficult subject to teach. You can't really teach it. You can't . . . state an objective and then say at the end of this lesson these children will have grasped this concept'. The alteration in the syllabus from the catechism to a more social-issues based course has its pedagogical problems:

> with the catechism and whatever, it was pretty straight forward . . . and now I know, from a teaching point of view it is a lot harder with all the vague issues that now come up.

If the alteration from a catechism-based religious education to a social-issues based curriculum has produced an ambiguity of content and pedagogy, there is also conflict over the quantities timetable. That is, on the one hand, 'If the school sets itself up to be a church school, then its number one priority should be teaching that religion . . . Now matric results are damn important but . . . if an extra period is to be taken its always 5th period—which happens to be the religion period. This is a little cock-eyed view of things'. On the other hand, as a lay teacher suggested, 'From what the kids have said and from what some of the other teachers have said, a lot of the R.E. that is being taught in the senior school has no relevance to the boys. Especially in H.S.C. a lot of them resent the fact that they have 5 or 6 periods a week in R.E. and they would rather be doing something else [related to] H.S.C. which is the be all and end all'.

Finally, the place of religion in the school is threatened by the decreasing proportion of the staff who are Brothers, thus necessitating the employment of lay staff to teach religion, among whom much less consensus might be assumed than among members of the religious community of the Brothers.

In all then, the reproduction of a formal religious culture that was previously the concern of a wholly Christian Brothers staff has been transformed by the establishment of a more social-issues oriented syllabus and by the laicisation of a large proportion of the staff. In such a situation the definition and practice of religious education is contested despite the expressed desire of parents for the reproduction of 'a good Catholic education' among their children.

Gender in C.B.C.

If the increasing laicisation of the staff has produced contestation and transformation in the religious education provided by the school, then the increasing feminisation of the staff is producing similar contestation and transformation of attitudes towards gender. For many of the female staff the attitudes of both male staff and boys create problems that initially focus on pedagogy and reveal a basically contradictory form of human relations to those traditionally employed. What struck one of the more experienced women on her arrival at C.B.C. was what she termed the conservatism of the school:

> I don't really enjoy teaching under this type of system . . . I don't get the rewards out of teaching that I have had before . . . for me it is like going back to teaching when I first started some 12 years ago. The structure is the problem. Even simple things. The desks are too big and heavy to move so they have to be in straight rows . . . I know the policy of the school is that they like order and tidiness and Brothers ask for people to line up but at that age kids should be able to go in and get on with what they are doing . . . That kind of strict discipline has an over-reaction in children where, when they are given freedom, they don't know how to handle it and they over-react and become stupid.

Several other women echo these sentiments. Another, younger woman teacher: 'most of the teachers have been males . . . but just now there is this influx of females and [the boys] seem to be revolting against it'. Yet another younger woman teacher: 'You often get the impression, especially in religious classes, that these boys are in continuous revolt the whole time'. This tension between the female staff and boys in the senior school is observed by male teachers: 'Now there are a lot more women, particularly young ones, which I don't think is all that good because . . . they get really attacked, not physically but mentally attacked by the boys and put under pressure'. One male staff member explains this phenomenon as follows:

> Women in C.B.C. suffer somewhat from an unfortunate attitude which I believe exists in the minds of many of the boys and puts them at a disadvantage because they are women. This in turn suggests something in the formation of those attitudes, or the reinforcement of those attitudes by staff and perhaps the Brothers themselves or maybe by parental attitudes. [For instance] recently I gave the class a task of arguing why the male should be the head of the family . . . A lot of them took the line that women are not suited to the task because the notion of being head was one of issuing instructions or directions and women are insufficiently capable of exerting their authority or do not have the requisite intelligence. Therefore the tasks they perform at home are the ones they are best suited to.

Certainly such an explanation is consistent with the parody of sexuality I observed in a free-form drama class where the 'wife' was all bum and boobs and the husband dominant and authoritarian. It is also evident in one teacher's report of behaviour at a camp: 'We took the children down on the camp and on the first night one of the boys wanted to ring up his girlfriend. They made a big deal out of this very important phone call, whereas had there been females around that type of thing would probably go on in a more relaxed natural situation'.

The possibility of co-education is a subject of interest to the boys: 'the boys ask for girls here, they make that type of comment to me all the time—why aren't there girls here?'. The issue is apparently not for discussion: 'I brought that issue up . . . casually with a couple of Brothers and they preferred not to discuss the issue'. Indeed there is some evidence that the Brothers find difficulties in dealing not only with girls ('they just won't accept girls into their schools, that is quite contrary to their policies') but also with female staff. For instance: 'while they accept them as staff they believe that they are dealing on a professional basis and can keep them at arms length. I think you will find that some of the Brothers here would tell you that their conversations with women . . . have to be at arms length. That is part of the tradition'.

The issue of gender therefore is not one of the simple reproduction of traditional sexual attitudes of male authority, intelligence and strength against female weakness, stupidity and softness, for such attitudes are challenged by the obvious intelligence, capability and strength of several female members of staff. Moreover the pedagogy of most female and some male lay staff exemplifies the humanity and respect for persons that equates closely with the caring, loving religious ideal that the school proclaims. Gender is, therefore, like religion, a focus for contestation and transformation rather than simply reproduction.

Control and C.B.C.

Historically control, like gender and religion and unlike class, has been a matter of reproduction rather than contestation and transformation: 'The Brothers . . . are authoritarian by nature and the nature of the order makes people that way. They have held the reins for so long and they are not going to have anyone else running their schools'. C.B.C. like other independent secondary schools, however, faces a number of external threats ranging from the 'deprivatisation' potentially associated with the acceptance of ever increasing sums of government money; through the encroachment of Catholic Education Offices with the concomitant standardisation of salary scales, appointment and promotion procedures and discretionary funding; to the rapid laicisation of staff who may well become, as is increasingly the case in New South Wales, unionised. This issue of laicisation is especially poignant: 'As far as the Christian Brothers are concerned . . . their numbers are dwindling. If they wanted to maintain a Christian Brothers ethos in the school . . . they ought to have

been more forceful about it. What is happening is the encroachment of the layman as opposed to the Christian Brothers and the lay person's influence in the school is becoming greater and greater without positive control by the Brothers'.

As far as most teachers are concerned the Christian Brothers' control centres on three areas: administration, discipline and curriculum. As far as administration is concerned the diminution in the size of the order has inevitably led to a retreat in the influence of the Brothers. Despite the magnitude of this retreat and the virtual collapse of the novitiate, many argue that the traditions of the Christian Brothers schools are being maintained because 'by having a Christian Brother as a senior administrator it is seen that the Christian Brother is still in control of the school and it is still their school'.

This control is important in two ways. Firstly, 'the Christian Brothers would say that they would maintain a better standard of education and discipline . . . the Brothers belong to that Irish code of discipline which subscribes to be very strict. Some of the lay teachers take a more relaxed view and perhaps a more human view of disciplinary problems and relationships with students'. As we saw in the discussion of gender, this is particularly, though not exclusively, true of the women staff. Whatever the case, however, things have changed a lot—as is indicated by a male staff member: 'In the years I was here as a student there were a lot more Brothers here and the discipline was a lot harder than it is now. There was corporal punishment . . . just done very easily and without a second thought. I think a lot of parents knew that and actually expected that to happen if anything went wrong with their son. They expected the Brothers to belt them and put them straight . . . Now all that has disappeared and you never hear of corporal punishment'. This latter is a slight exaggeration, for during our stay at the school 'Brother Bash' lined up a number of miscreants in the gym and strapped them—after demanding that the female staff leave the scene of this public humiliation. However, the point stands that the 'brutal discipline' traditionally associated with the Brothers has largely given way to other forms of control and negotiation.

The second claim for the Brothers' part in providing a 'good Catholic education' is that 'they have control of what happens in the school—what subjects are taught and so on'. This is, in a certain limited sense, literally correct. For instance, from the staff's point of view, 'the first we heard of [the introduction of] Italian was at a parent teacher session and we heard from the Principal that an Italian teacher had been employed'. The rationale for such decisions is often obscure to the staff as a whole who suggest that 'we rely very heavily on direction from the top. We really can't make any decisions. I mean we can make decisions but whether or not they are implemented or taken notice of is another thing'. The issue leads to ambivalence. On the one hand once decisions are made individual teacher autonomy is all but absolute: 'What I do in the classroom I am left to do on my own. There is no intrusion there'. Such autonomy is valued but it also leads to feelings of isolation and lack of co-ordination. One recently arrived staff member had this to say: 'The only problem I see . . . is the lack of communication. You feel you are being neglected in a certain way but as for having authority over things you have got that'.

The most significant issue here is that related to the co-ordination of the curriculum. One senior staff member suggests:

> 'When I speak of the curriculum I speak about it as a totality of what is happening [but] my discussion [at C B C] is really on syllabus. There hasn't been enough discussion on curriculum . . . involving other people in the process. For years we have spoken about curriculum when we really mean syllabus—syllabus and book learning. That is the way it started in Ireland. It was

> important that tables be taught and maths be taught and English be taught and certain narrow confines of knowledge be taught. But discipline was maintained. People did the right thing. They sat in rows and all that kind of thing. Surprisingly enough that still permeates a lot of the school and we haven't really got away from that'.

Control over administration, discipline and curriculum is, therefore, contested and in a process of transformation that is being hastened by the growing laicisation of the staff.

Conclusion

What this study seems to show then, is that the processes of reproduction, contestation and transformation act differentially both through time and with regard to the external context and internal processes of C.B.C. The value of ethnographic studies such as this is that they allow the empirical assessment of theoretical explanations which at certain levels of abstraction can be either naive or doctrinaire thus misrepresenting the lived experience of individuals and the nature of institutional and social life. What has been presented here is but a thumbnail sketch of the analysis we are currently undertaking. We believe, however, that ethnographies conceived and executed in this fashion can be a powerful aid to both theoretical and empirical analysis of fundamental social and educational processes such as those of reproduction, contestation and transformation.

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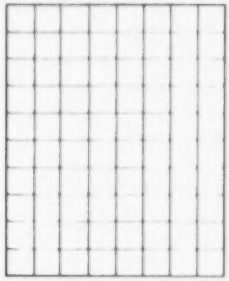
Class, culture and curriculum: A study of continuity and change in a Catholic school



Themes of the ethnography

The foreshadowed problem of the research project that was initially reported in the preceding set of papers can be put succinctly in the form of two related research questions:

(1) How does an individual school like C.B.C. reproduce itself over time?

(2) What supports and inhibits such reproduction?

It is clear that adequate answers to these questions will involve an exploration not only of C.B.C. itself and of the perceptions of C.B.C. actors, but also of historical and contemporary linkages between C.B.C. and the wider society.

Much of the research, and the preceding paper by Angus, dealt specifically with the historical educational mission of the Christian Brothers as perceived by the Brothers of the C.B.C. community and as played out at C.B.C. The crucial historical importance to the Brothers' mission of advancing, through education, the social mobility of Australian Catholics was examined and related to the foundation of C.B.C. in 1932. It is apparent from the data, however, that although the Brothers believe that they have contributed to the social and economic advancement of Catholics, once victims of prejudice and poverty and therefore defined as needy, there is now a sense of crisis within the Congregation. The crisis, which has been precipitated by the numerical slump in membership of the Order and dearth of new entrants, has provoked reappraisal of the current activities of the Christian Brothers at C.B.C., Newburyport, as elsewhere. At C.B.C., the optimistic talk of the younger Brothers of new and different missions and of rediscovering the apostolate of the founder is juxtaposed with the disillusionment of those, mainly older, Brothers who believe that the traditions of their Order are threatened by the majority presence of lay teachers in their schools. The uncertainty which now characterises the existence of C.B.C. was a recurrent motif throughout the study.

C.B.C. and religious education

Despite the obvious and distinctive presence of many religious symbols and images, no unity of religious purpose was discernible at C.B.C. It is clear from Smith's paper that although the purpose of religious formation, which is used to justify the existence of Catholic schools, is made explicit in primary grades, the internalisation of any religious commitment by senior pupils is variable. Moreover, the importance of education for academic success and examination results has assumed priority over religious education. A symptom of the academic emphasis, a selective

entrance policy, seems to some to be a clear contradiction of the proudly stated tradition of the Christian Brothers: that of service to the needy.

The ambiguity of the Brothers' priorities regarding academic and religious emphasis is a source of tension. In order to maintain the status of C.B.C. as a 'Christian Brothers School' religion is very much the preserve of the Brothers. Thus, although 80 per cent of the teachers are lay, most teaching of religious knowledge is conducted by Brothers. This is especially the case at senior levels of the school. However, this is also the level at which pupils are largely indifferent or even hostile towards the Brothers and their religious message, and towards the failure of teachers to acknowledge and tolerate the personal 'crisis of faith' that many senior pupils experience. Lay teachers have greater responsibility for the teaching of religion at junior secondary and primary levels of the school. It is at these levels, especially, that important initiatives in religious education, which are discussed in Bates's paper and which will be examined in some detail later, are being developed.

An additional complication arises from the identification of the majority of older Brothers with a traditional view of Catholicism which contrasts markedly with the more modern views of most lay teachers and some younger Brothers. For instance, the influence of the Second Vatican Council since the 1960s has transformed the way some teachers, especially lay teachers and younger Brothers, regard Catholicism and the teaching of religion. The Vatican Council is seen by many of these teachers as a watershed in the long history of Catholicism. It stimulated, they argue, an era of reform and innovation within the Catholic religion and recognised the importance of the laity by emphasising that the Church should be a 'faith community'. The Council also emphasised that the Church should play an important role in promoting social justice. 'Post-Vatican' and 'pre-Vatican' attitudes are apparent at C.B.C. in approaches to dogma, church history, bible study and, above all, the treatment of social and political issues. These have implications for pedagogy and student–teacher relations.

The religious life at C.B.C. is characterised by serious unresolved differences between teachers of religion and between religious and lay staff and by a failure to confront various contemporary religious controversies. Partly as a result, religious education lacks coherence and is poorly co-ordinated. The individual approaches taken by various teachers within their own classrooms fragment rather than consolidate the religious life that is represented to pupils.

Administration, authority relations and pupil control

The administration of C.B.C. was seen to be a matter which is formally in the hands of the principal. Smith's paper suggests that, like his predecessors, Brother Carter is following his own agenda and his own priorities, and is attempting to preserve the Brothers' minority control of the school. Despite this, several long-serving lay teachers have accrued substantial informal power and there is amongst the Brothers some support for suggestions that lay teachers should be given more authority in Brothers' schools. At present, however, many lay teachers, insecure in their positions and unsure of their status and responsibilities, are reluctant to challenge what they perceive to be the place of a lay teacher in 'a Brothers' school'. Certainly, few opportunities are provided for either Brothers or lay teachers to influence decision making by means of formal procedures of subject and area co-ordination. Nevertheless, teachers, including the most recently appointed teachers, have been responsible for a number of recent initiatives – especially curriculum initiatives which have been developed by individual teachers and pairs of teachers and which flourish behind the closed doors of their autonomous classrooms.

The paper by Bates concludes that the Brothers' tradition of strict discipline and control is being modified at C.B.C. Although control remains an institutional priority, and is perhaps the highest priority of the principal as is exemplified by his dealings with pupils and with staff at staff meetings, the strict discipline of previous years has been challenged by lay teachers, especially female teachers. Some Brothers, too, have struggled to establish more personal relationships with pupils and to overcome the expectation of students that they conform to the stereotype of the authoritarian Brother. On the other hand, many teachers, especially young lay teachers, feel constrained by institutional expectations to imitate aspects of the Brothers' stereotype. Moreover, many Brothers believe that discipline has suffered at C.B.C. since the Brothers, because of the need for lay teachers who are trained as subject specialists, were forced to abandon the traditional arrangement of each Brother being almost totally responsible for the teaching of one class.

The theme of order, which is woven through each paper influences curriculum and evaluation at C.B.C. The curriculum has been governed in the past by the priority of gaining good results in the Higher School Certificate (H.S.C.) examinations. This emphasis is still pronounced and ensures that, for the most part, an extremely narrow curriculum is followed. The mechanistic curriculum with its orderly, linear path to the H.S.C. is in

harmony with the emphasis upon social and economic advancement for C.B.C. pupils through examination success. The curriculum is also a competitive one, and regular and pervasive assessment is used to exclude from academic progress those pupils whose marks are not compatible with H.S.C. standards. But the curriculum is not totally monolithic. Indeed, consideration of 'relevant' curriculum has encouraged some curriculum initiatives at C.B.C. Such initiatives, however, as with initiatives in religious education and student-teacher relationships, are mainly the work of individuals or pairs of teachers who, as discussed in Smith's paper, develop their own programs in their uncoordinated classrooms. A more public example of curriculum initiative is the Year 11 transition course – but this course is offered only to boys who will not be permitted to proceed to H.S.C., thus directly protecting H.S.C. standards.

Education and social mobility

Each of the readings dealt to some extent with the Christian Brothers' mission of education for social mobility. From its foundation, C.B.C., the Brothers and their mission were enthusiastically supported by Newburyport Catholics who, like the Brothers, wanted to see Catholic people in influential positions from where they could challenge the Protestant dominance of society and commerce.

It appears that many Catholic men in Newburyport have indeed gained positions of some influence and prestige in the town – especially in banking and retailing industries. While many of these relatively prominent citizens are said to owe their success to C.B.C., some do not send their own sons to the school but to the more prestigious, more expensive Protestant private schools in Newburyport. Nevertheless, even during a period of economic recession, the old boys of Christian Brothers College have been instrumental in assisting the school's exit students to secure employment.

Although high youth unemployment in Newburyport is making the task of getting students into influential positions increasingly difficult, virtually all C.B.C. pupils do get jobs. According to Watkins's paper, this is largely because of the school's reputation for 'academic standards' and discipline, and is also due to the extensive C.B.C. network within the local area. The school's work experience program develops the networks of individual pupils and further extends the C.B.C. network and C.B.C.'s reputation as a producer of suitably disciplined labour.

Collectively, the four papers indicate how and why a particular set of circumstances and meanings has emerged in the specific

locale of C.B.C. in Newburyport. It must be remembered, however, that what may appear to be stable, institutionalised meanings have resulted from the creative actions of C.B.C. members since 1932 and are open to continual transformation and change. Indeed, the readings have indicated that the comfort and stability of a combined unity of purpose, the predictability of institutionalised traditions which once characterised C.B.C. and which were the active creations of an earlier generation of Christian Brothers and Newburyport Catholics, have given way to a period of uncertainty. Although an appearance of stability and conformity persists at C.B.C., and an idealised notion of what constitutes 'a Brothers' school' endures, changes have occurred and are occurring at the school. These changes in turn are mediated by the legacy of C.B.C.'s continuing traditions and history.

The task of explaining continuity and change at C.B.C. is undertaken in the following sections that deal respectively with reproduction and transformation at C.B.C., C.B.C. schooling and access to job market, C.B.C. and the competitive academic curriculum, individual autonomy within institutional control, and finally, uncertainty and crisis at C.B.C.

Reproduction and transformation at C.B.C.

The readings indicate that those associated with C.B.C. perceive the school as having been founded in a mission of class intervention and transformation. As part of the wider plan of the Catholic hierarchy, the social position of Catholics in Newburyport society was to be transformed through education. Christian Brothers College was established by the Christian Brothers as part of the broader attempt to shift the class location of Australian Catholics. That early commitment had a strong radical element of contestation of the Protestant dominance of secondary education, white collar employment and the professions. The radical nature of the attempt, however, was, from the start, flawed and partial in that the predominant, meritocratic view of Australian society was not challenged. Rather than demanding class justice, Australian Catholics, largely Irish and working class, sought to win dignity by escaping from their class through the aggressively competitive education that was offered by schools like C.B.C.

The part played by C.B.C. in the reproduction and transformation of social and economic status is discussed in this section through an examination of, first, the social mobility of Catholics in Newburyport, and second, the theoretical constructs of cultural markets and hegemony as well as mobility and reproduction.

The social mobility of Newburyport Catholics

The mission of the Christian Brothers, which was enthusiastically supported by the Catholics of Newburyport, was to improve the status of the Catholic community by facilitating the entry of Catholics to the semi-professional and business sectors of the town – to the 'middle' class. Catholic schools like C.B.C. have played a major part in the 'class struggle' of Catholics, once predominantly Irish and working class. Christian Brothers College is the product of the Brothers' traditional emphasis upon improving the social lot of the Catholic population. The Irish working class, according to the Brothers and associates of C.B.C., used the school as an avenue to white-collar employment. Over the generations, however, the fierceness with which examination success was pursued seems to have resulted in the Catholic school's identification with the middle-class values that facilitate upward social mobility and maintain middle-class positions. Ironically, however, the very success of C.B.C. in promoting social mobility may have ultimately alienated Catholics from their class origins. By positively embracing and reinforcing the middle-class attitudes that are esential for the upward social mobility of working-class Catholic children, teachers at C.B.C. have attempted to prepare children to take their places in the dominant society without questioning it. Christian Brothers College, then, has become a Catholic school in which one can find 'little evidence of Church schools forming a new man, rather than the man required by, and fitting into, the established order' (Buchhorn, 1979, p. 118).

This observation carries implications regarding a second aspect of the mission of Brothers schooling that was emphasised in the ethnography by C.B.C. participants: the education of Catholic children in the Catholic faith. The case of C.B.C. is one in which access to the established social order, as evidenced by the priority which is currently given to academic subjects and to the preparation of pupils for examinations in comparison with that given to religious education, is treated in a mechanistic and non-problematic manner. The Christian message at C.B.C., instead of provoking analysis of the justice of human relationships, including class relationships, has become merely an agent of social integration (Bates 1982; Watkins 1984).

The historical task of educating Newburyport Catholic youth for social mobility is seen as part of the apostolate of the Christian Brothers to serve the needy, Catholics having been regarded historically as victims of prejudice and of their class location. But the sense of service that remains at C.B.C. has long lost the radical element that once sustained it. The contestation of Protestant

domination of society and the attempt to ensure social justice to Catholics by altering their class location have themselves been transformed. The social hierarchy is taken as given and the place of Catholics in its middle reaches is to be maintained. The business of the school, according to the principal and many teachers, is to fit its students for entry into or continued membership of those levels. The mission of service, therefore, has become transformed into a conservative reproductive mission—one of equipping middle-class Catholics to take their places in a predominantly middle-class society.

The following sections begin the task of theoretically explaining the significance in the wider social and cultural context of the changes at C.B.C. that have so far been described. The explanation utilises Collins's (1977) notion of cultural markets and Gramsci's (1971) notion of hegemony.

Cultural markets, hegemony, mobility and reproduction

Christian Brothers College both meets and simultaneously produces a demand for its education services—a demand which can be seen more broadly as part of a 'cultural market' (Collins 1977). Through this cultural market Newburyport Catholics have historically attempted to extend their own opportunities relative to those of the previously predominant and more economically powerful Protestant groups. Although empowered throughout this historical period by their relative autonomy (Althusser 1971), by entering into the production of cultural goods for a cultural market, C.B.C. participants were also entering into a relationship with the dominant culture of capitalism that fits the Gramscian notion of 'hegemony' (Gramsci 1971). This is an important theoretical construction which has considerable explanatory power in the case of C.B.C.

The hegemony or cultural dominance of entrenched social groups, according to Gramsci, is mediated through the institutions of civil society. And while such mediation encourages the reproduction of cultural patterns and social arrangements, actors in specific institutions always retain a degree of relative autonomy which allows for 'those non-reproductive moments that constitute and support the critical notion of human agency' (Giroux 1983a, p. 285). Because such agency forms an active and constant link between structural limits and lived effects,

> institutions are also sites for the production of alternative cultural forms, which may or may not be counter-hegemonic. Those forms which work within (i.e. are limited by) the dominant hegemony serve to reproduce existing cultural categories. In their turn these

> categories legitimate and reproduce existing social structures and relations. Counter-hegemonic activities, on the other hand, produce tendencies towards changes in existing social relations, through particular institutional sites within civil society.
>
> (Gordon 1984, p. 112)

The possibility of *counter*-hegemony, therefore, is ever present, even though such moments are by and large controlled and defused by being incorporated into the dominant hegemony. The latter appears to have been the case at C.B.C. This helps to explain the transformation of an oppositional movement into a reproductive one.

For Gramsci, as for Giroux, the dominance or hegemony of certain classes is achieved and maintained not so much through coercive practices as through ideological practices. It is by means of ideological hegemony that ruling classes gain the consent of the dominated in two ways (Giroux 1981). Firstly, the 'fundamental class exercises control through its moral and intellectual leadership over allied classes' (Giroux 1981, p. 17). Such leadership is not imposed, as Gramsci emphasises, but instead 'represents a pedagogic and politically transformative process whereby the dominant class articulates a hegemonic principle that brings together common elements drawn from the world views and interests of allied groups' (Giroux 1981, p. 17) Hegemony then is both an outcome and a process of ideological leadership. Secondly, hegemony exists in the nature of the *relationship* between classes which, as Giroux explains:

> involves the successful attempt of the dominant class to utilize its control over the resources of the state and civil society . . . Through the dual use of force and consent, the dominant class uses its political, moral, and intellectual leadership to shape and incorporate the 'taken-for-granted' views, needs, and concerns of subordinate groups. In doing so, the dominant class not only attempts to influence the interest and needs of such groups, but also contains the radical opportunities by placing limits on opposition discourse and practices.
>
> (Giroux 1981, p. 17)

Although both forms of hegemony can be detected in the case of C.B.C., this last point of Giroux is especially significant in the light of the transformation of C.B.C.'s mission from one of change and contestation to one of reproduction and social stability. The concept of hegemony allows an understanding of how, despite the fact that 'at any time, forms of alternative or directly oppositional politics and culture exist as significant elements in the society . . . the decisive hegemonic function is to control or transform and even incorporate them' (Williams 1977, p. 113). This is because the

hegemony presents a universal and 'natural' view of the world which includes common-sense or taken-for-granted perspectives of 'the way things are'. Thus, even movements of resistance are likely to be steeped in the common-sense, hegemonic 'reality'.

In the case of C.B.C. the resistance of Catholics to Protestant domination simultaneously incorporated the ideological hegemony contained in common-sense notions of social advancement, economic influence, and success and power in society. As a result, education at C.B.C., although oppositional in one sense, never developed a truly radical significance. Instead, the case of C.B.C. illustrates the dialectical nature of resistance. The logic that informs the attempt to raise the social and economic standing of Catholics in Newburyport, in opposition to historical Anglo-Protestant domination, is itself rooted in the premises of capitalist Anglo-Protestant rationality. C.B.C.'s very 'success' in accommodating its pupils to this hegemony has rendered it no longer oppositional. By seeking and gaining access to a social level from which Catholics had been excluded, C.B.C. provided a particular instance where 'informed intentional opposition is contained by accommodation from or even by incorporation into the system' (Wexler & Whitson 1982).

In the cultural production that has been ongoing at C.B.C. since 1932, the human agency which created a moment of resistance cannot be clearly separated from, or understood in isolation from, the hegemonic structure which limited and incorporated the struggle for self-formation. As Gordon suggests, reinforcing a point made in Willis's (1977) study, in such situations:

> cultural choices made in one direction may bring about, in profound yet unperceived ways, unintended effects in another. Thus, transformation and reproduction may exist, in always contradictory ways, side by side within a culture.
>
> (Gordon 1984, p. 114)

Through the institutionalisation of particular cultural and organisational processes, C.B.C., despite its consciously oppositional origins, has contributed to the dominant hegemony by means which were unintended and largely unforeseen. Two ways in which this appears from the data to have occurred are similar to those called 'ghettoization' and 'ralionalization' by Wexler & Whitson (1982, p. 38).

'Ghettoization' refers to the initial creation of an 'organized enclave' (Wexler & Whitson 1982, p. 38) which fiercely maintains its founding mission of resistance. The oppositional intention may become diluted through rationalisation, however, as is the case at C.B.C., 'when the leadership is willing to accommodate to the

environment in order to win popular acceptance' (Wexler & Whitson 1982, p. 38). The school's mission of facilitating Catholic entry to the middle class required that it be seen by the Newburyport community as an effective producer of cultural commodities including academic credentials. Moreover, as Wexler & Whitson (1982, pp. 38–9) suggest in regard to organisations that seek public acceptance, organisational effectiveness and legitimacy as perceived by dominant social groups is often 'achieved at the cost of oppositionality . . . Oppositional practices take on an unintended meaning through which they become articulated to the hegemonic system'. This seems to have been the case at C.B.C.

While the school's initial opposition was founded in the experience of Catholics of marginality, its effectiveness as a cultural producer made C.B.C. acceptable not only to Catholics who sought social mobility but also to dominant social groups. This illustrates the complexity of the theoretical construct of social reproduction which, according to Robinson, refers to two different things:

> First, it refers to the ways in which the *structure* of classes in the social relations of production is legitimated and maintained over time . . . Second, reproduction refers to the means whereby the *relative position of individuals or families* in the class structure is maintained thoughout their work lives or from generation to generation.
>
> (Robinson 1984, p. 182)

In Newburyport, although there is perceived to have been some improvement in the overall status of the Catholic cultural group, and although this is attributed by participants largely to the influence of C.B.C., the contestation of social reproduction that occurs at C.B.C. is essentially of the second form noted by Robinson (1984). Although they are pushed by the Brothers, it is ultimately through pupils' own individual efforts and individual academic successes that they are thought to improve their positions. But as many theorists argue (for example, Bourdieu 1977a; Bourdieu & Passeron 1977; Poulantzas 1975), as far as basic social transformation is concerned, 'the relative position of individuals in the class structure is irrelevant as long as the structure of class relations itself remains intact' (Robinson 1984, p. 183). These theorists insist that the obvious presence of some individual mobility actually reinforces and legitimates the inequality of the wider class structure (see, especially, Bourdieu 1977a). By encouraging the belief that class mobility is an *actual* possibility for all citizens, C.B.C. contributes to the mystification of the structures of class relations (Bourdieu 1977b) and to the

maintenance of class inequality in which many Catholics are still enmeshed.

It is a similar logic that convinces the clients of C.B.C., both pupils and parents, that they can pursue and accumulate the commodities – starting with a C.B.C. education – that are badges of individual penetration to the higher rungs of social life, and which undermine older patterns of community and social solidarity (Goldman & Tickamyer 1984). That this effect, which is partly the consequence of the Brothers' emphasis on social mobility, was unintended and unforeseen was apparent in the way in which many Brothers expressed disappointment at the materialism and consumerism of modern society which they believed has seeped into the consciousness of Catholics in Newburyport. Such materialism, they maintained, was responsible for the dearth of religious vocations and the decline of spiritual values. But one could argue that educating several generations of Catholic boys to take their places in the middle and upper levels of society may have resulted in the products of Brothers' schools eventually accepting, indeed promoting, middle-class materialistic values to the impoverishment of spiritual values. Rather than transforming the Australian middle class through the message of Jesus, many of these 'successful' Catholics were, instead, seduced by the consumerism of their adopted class. Thus, the class system is not transformed through the introduction of radical Catholic religion – rather, sections of the Catholic working class who 'made good' through education may be said to have simply appropriated, uncritically, middle-class values and cultural mores. Such appropriation was aided and abetted by the Christian Brothers' educational mission. 'Successful' Catholics were merely co-opted and became assimilated within the dominant order.

It was merely an extension of the same logic for many of these 'successful' Catholics to abandon C.B.C. and attempt to purchase the more expensive commodity of an education from one of the more prestigious Protestant colleges for their own children, for such a commodity, it may be argued, facilitates entry to a still higher level of society. Thus, the belief that education can foster the social and economic advancement of individuals and groups has worked at C.B.C. to 'extend and legitimate the marketisation of schooling' (Ashenden et al. 1983).

An important point about hegemony, however, should not be overlooked in this analysis. Gramsci (1971) emphasised that although the common sense of dominated groups plays into the hands, as it were, in a non-reductive fashion, of the dominant group, there are always moments of 'good sense' within common

sense. As Shapiro argues, education 'cannot be viewed as merely an extension of the activities of the dominant economic class. . . as simply the reflection of the ideology of monopoly capitalism' (Shapiro 1981, p. 21). When the Christian Brothers and other religious orders founded secondary schools in the early twentieth century, they were satisfying a genuine need for Catholic schools at that historical moment. Public secondary education was still virtually non-existent at the time of C.B.C.'s foundation and Catholics were generally excluded from Protestant schools. Catholics felt that they were victims of prejudice and exclusion and sought to compete equally with advantaged groups. This explains the early emphasis on public service examinations since, as several Brothers emphasised during the ethnography, entrance to public service positions was decided by examination performance, or 'merit', compared to many areas where Catholics and Irish were spurned. The myth of meritocracy was not naïvely accepted, therefore, as Catholics were only too familiar with prejudice and Protestant patronage. This was no simple example, then, of equality of opportunity merely making for mobility within the status quo. Therefore, although the ultimate result is that 'the meritocratic principle of social mobility merely legitimizes inequality, making its continued existance acceptable as a kind of safety-valve' (Entwistle 1978, p. 11), the C.B.C. example is none the less of real and substantial historical importance. It demonstrates that educational institutions in Australia were not solely the product of the dominant group but represent also the struggle by subordinate groups for social justice. The establishment of impartial public service examinations was a complementary aspect of this struggle. This element of 'good sense' (Gramsci 1971) can still be detected at C.B.C. in the recent emergence of 'social justice' as a curriculum issue, especially in religious education.

The C.B.C. case, therefore, illustrates Giroux's point that any social and political context exhibits 'a combination of reactionary and progressive behaviours – behaviours that embody ideologies both underlying the structure of social domination and containing the logic necessary to overcome it' (Giroux 1983a, p. 285. See also Giroux 1983b). That is, although education at C.B.C. was initially an expression of the opposition of Catholics to their social marginality, Catholic resistance to Anglo-Protestant domination took the form of a bid for comparable Catholic social and economic power. This supports Giroux's argument that, 'on one level, resistance may be the simple appropriation and display of power, and may manifest itself through the interests and discourse of the worst aspects of capitalist rationality' (Giroux 1983a, p. 285). As has been illustrated, despite its elements of good sense and

historical appropriateness, the common-sense logic that informed resistance to social arrangements was a dominating rather than a liberating logic, one that expressed 'the repressive moments inscribed in such [resistance] by the dominant culture rather than a message of protest against their existence' (Giroux 1983a, p. 286).

This section, through a discussion of cultural markets, class and hegemony in relation to the historical, social and religious purposes of C.B.C., has demonstrated that the school's initial oppositional and transformative intentions in relation to the social status of Catholics were rooted in a logic that was incapable of challenging the essential injustice of a hierarchical capitalist society. The school's continuing emphasis upon individual achievement as a means of gaining upward social mobility ignores the wider structural forces which ensure that inequality is perpetuated. Indeed, despite its oppositional intentions, C.B.C. now actually contributes to the legitimation and reproduction of social inequality by endorsing the middle-class values that assist pupils in gaining employment. This issue is examined in detail in the following section.

C.B.C schooling and access to the job market

Those aspects of schooling at C.B.C. which have a tendency to reproduce ruling-class dominance, as discussed in the previous section, facilitate the integration of C.B.C. students into local economic life and the job market. The rigid control and 'academic' curriculum that are associated with C.B.C. appear to enhance the job prospects of its school leavers. Pupils, although they resist absolute control over their school lives, rationalise that compliance with the rigid discipline and academic demands will eventually pay dividends in employment opportunities. Many participants, especially elderly Brothers, praised the tradition, still characteristic of Brothers' schools, in which education involves a peculiar blend of harsh, often physically harsh, methods of control and a mission of serving and genuinely helping pupils. Grace's assessment of education in Victorian Britain notes a similar blend of intentions:

> The basic imperative to control coincided with a genuinely humanitarian and Christian impulse to help, a radical interest in equipping the people for political membership, a capitalist interest in rendering them competent and efficient workers, a religious interest in making them 'good' and a liberal/cultural interest in 'elevating' and 'refining' them to an appreciation of a higher order of culture. That many of these interests were nothing more than variations on the basic theme of control is clearly an arguable position.
>
> (Grace 1978, p. 10)

It should also be noted that at C.B.C., given the unproblematic acceptance of existing social structures and of individual effort and attainment as the legitimate and feasible means of social and economic advancement, these interests also share a tendency to reproduce existing structures.

In arguing that C.B.C. contributes to cultural reproduction, however, it is clear that no simple or mechanistic notion of reproduction explains the C.B.C. case. Reproduction must be seen in a dialectical relationship with resistance, and in a manner which does not itself reproduce a false distinction between agency and structure. For, as Giroux cautions in relation to recent ethnographic work:

> despite their concrete differences, resistance and reproduction approaches to education share the failure of recycling and reproducing the dualism between agency and structure, a failure that has plagued educational theory and practice for decades, while simultaneously representing its greatest challenge. Consequently, neither position provides the foundation for a theory of education that links structures and institutions to human agency and action in a dialectical manner.
>
> (Giroux 1983a, p. 261)

One scholar who has attempted to deal with the dialectic of reproduction and resistance, and of agency and structure, is Bourdieu (see, especially, 1977b). It is by means of his concept of habitus that Bourdieu attempts:

> to transcend such traditional dichotomies as objective and subjective, micro and macro by relating individuals to social structure by a system of mediations in a way so that the idea that objective structures have subjective consequences is not incompatible with the view that the social world is constructed by individual actors.
>
> (Swartz 1981, p. 330)

The habitus, the general mode of thinking by which individuals perceive and assess their own life chances on the basis of their individual situations and life experiences, provides students:

> not so much with particular and particularised schemes of thought as with that general disposition which engenders particular schemes, which may then be applied in different domains of thought and action.
>
> (Bourdieu 1971, p. 184)

Through the habitus individuals perceive their own class location and their chances of social mobility.

In a way that extends Weber's (1968) definitions of class and status, Bourdieu sees social class as a dynamic 'composite profile of possessions, or capitals, that may be accumulated, monopolised, or

exchanged in order to maintain or improve positions in the stratification order' (Swartz 1981, p. 331) The concept of 'cultural capital' is especially significant in C.B.C.'s case. Bourdieu (1974, 1977b) uses this term to convey the manner in which the values, dispositions and culture of dominant social groups can be transacted in much the same way as economic capital. Capitalist society is so structured as to reward the possessors of appropriate cultural traits. In schools, the culture of dominant groups is taken for granted as the legitimate culture. Hence the reproductive nature of schools derives from their tendency to treat all children as if they had equal access to the cultural capital that is possessed by the dominant group (Harker 1984). The dominance of such groups is thus preserved as their children cash in their cultural capital in schools and upon entering the job market:

> Once finished with schooling, individuals carry a fund of culture which, if it is worth enough on the existing cultural market, gives them entree to particular occupations and social circles. This movement of individuals through a system of cultural inculcation thus reconstitutes the structure of society.
>
> (Collins 1981, p. 176)

The economy of cultural capital, therefore, exists in a direct relationship with the material economy but in a way which is obscured because the cultural market exerts what Bourdieu calls 'symbolic violence':

> the gentle, invisible form of violence, which is never recognised as such, and is not so much undergone as chosen, the violence of credit, confidence, obligation, personal loyalty, hospitality, gifts, gratitude, piety.
>
> (Bourdieu 1977b, p. 192)

It is through such symbolic violence that reproductive tendencies in society and in institutions are taken for granted as natural and neutral.

At C.B.C., the cultural gains made on behalf of the school's clients are defended. The status culture of appropriate traits, dispositions and conventions is reproduced in the crucial, ongoing struggle to maintain, or extend if possible, the status and prestige of C.B.C. in the socio-cultural system of Newburyport (Watkins 1984). In the interplay of individual, family, school, Catholic and work cultures that make up the social networks of Newburyport, it was apparent throughout the ethnography that, as Watkins observes:

> At C.B.C., the family and school values of discipline, self-control, and obedience find themselves in harmony with each other and with the demands of the local employers.
>
> (Watkins 1984, p. 67)

Such cultural traits were perceived to be important factors in the successful entry of C.B.C. students to the labour market.

Bourdieu emphasises that the habitus is never static. Initially acquired in the family, the habitus 'underlies the structuring of school experiences' (Bourdieu 1977b, p. 87) but also, importantly for this study, school experiences in turn influence the habitus which then influences the individual's future accumulation of further cultural capital through job, economic and cultural markets:

> the habitus transformed by schooling, itself diversified, in turn underlies the structuring of all subsequent experiences . . . from restructuring to restructuring.
>
> (Bourdieu 1977b, p. 87)

For ruling-class individuals the passage from family to school to social and economic success is a relatively straightforward progression since it is the culture that is authorised by the dominant class that is taught in schools. But, as Harker points out:

> For an individual from a non-dominant background to succeed . . . the appropriate cultural capital has to be acquired. . .
>
> (Harker 1984, p. 118)

It is in this latter sense that the role of C.B.C. in the *production* as well as the *re*-production of 'the cultural commodities needed by a corporate society' (Apple 1982, p. 45) becomes especially significant. It is also in this sense that Bourdieu's work is seen by recent critics to be somewhat limited (but see Harker 1984). Apple, for instance, argues:

> [Bourdieu's use of 'cultural capital'] fails to catch the school's role in the *production* of a kind of capital. Bourdieu's work is still something of an allocation theory. For him, cultural capital is used as a device to allocate students, by class, to their 'proper' position in society. Students without it are, by definition, deviant. What such an approach does not catch is that schools also act as one of the primary modes of production of the cultural commodities . . .
>
> (Apple 1982, p. 45)

It is through such cultural production that C.B.C.'s mission of social transformation is pursued:

> Bourdieu perceived that with the development of capitalism, reproduction has become more dependent on cultural assets or cultural capital instead of inherited wealth. These cultural assets were also perceived as important by the Christian Brothers in their self-appointed task of facilitating the entry of working-class Catholics into the 'middle class' of Protestant society. Schools like C.B.C. therefore attempted to ensure that poor Catholics could overcome their lack of wealth and property by the acquisition of specific cultural assets.
>
> (Watkins 1984, p. 74)

This monograph has indicated that C.B.C. has had and is having considerable success in this regard. But it is also clear that in a larger sense C.B.C. has, in the process, helped to cement the symbolic domination of economic and cultural elites. This is because:

> Even when [the school] does not manage to provide the opportunity for appropriating the dominant culture, it can at least inculcate recognition of the legitimacy of this culture and of those who have the means of appropriating it. Symbolic domination accompanies and redoubles economic domination.
>
> (Bourdieu & Boltanski 1978, p. 217)

That is to say, the meritocratic myth, upon which an inequitable, hierarchical society is based, is legitimated and reinforced by schools like C.B.C. The unquestioning pursuit of academic credentials and local status is in turn supported by that section of its clientele which is middle class and directly involved in business and industry, and especially by those recently upwardly mobile who consciously regard the school as having contributed to their success. But it is also supported by working-class parents who want their children to succeed within the existing social and economic order.

Moreover, in the effort to move up the ladder by gaining educational capital, 'Working-class pupils . . . have exchanged working class capital for their educational capital which is [now] their sole possession' (Harker 1984, p. 124). Working-class pupils who battle their way through to Year 12 at C.B.C. may well become lost to the working class. Thus, it can be argued that C.B.C., along with similar Catholic schools, has played a substantial part in the fragmentation of the Australian working class. Upwardly mobile Catholics have formed, as it were, a 'class fraction' which in Newburyport comprises now both lower-middle and middle-class groups with links to C.B.C., predominantly, and to other Catholic schools.

There is little doubt that C.B.C. is perceived as conferring the 'cultural capital' and establishing the old-boy network necessary to facilitate employment and advancement in the local Newburyport area. The more exclusive and expensive Newburyport private Protestant schools, however, are seen to confer even more status upon their clients than C.B.C. does. Moreover, the extensive social networks associated with the prestigious Protestant schools ensure that their pupils are equipped with cultural capital that is more readily negotiable and more widely redeemable than that which C.B.C. can provide. Thus, many of Newburyport's more affluent Catholics, in many cases educated for social mobility by the Brothers, and now increasingly assimilated into the dominant culture by a process of 'embourgeoisement' (Bourdieu 1977b),

favour these elite schools for Australia's 'ruling class' (Connell et al. 1982) which represent even greater commodity value than C.B.C. does.

Christian Brothers College students and teachers believe that job seekers from the school have an advantage over other Newburyport students because the discipline and academic emphasis of the school are attractive to prospective employers. A major emphasis in the school's program is to inculcate and reinforce such dispositions as compliance, obedience, self-control and respect for authority, which are major tenets of both Catholicism (especially Irish Catholicism) and capitalism (Watkins 1984). The school therefore, like British schools studied by Grace, is 'essentially engaged in a domesticating and job-selecting activity for a capitalist economy' (Grace 1978, p. 53). This works doubly to the economic advantage of C.B.C. pupils in a period in which academic credentials alone have become relatively devalued (Collins 1979) so that appropriate dispositions and the status of C.B.C. carry even greater market value.

Because many competitors in the labour market are likely to have similar credentials, employment opportunities are enhanced not only by the possession of appropriate cultural traits but also by access to appropriate social networks (Granovetter 1974, 1981), an important component of cultural capital. As Watkins explains:

> the concept of cultural capital includes not only resources such as verbal facility, general dispositions, and cultural awareness, but also social connections and contacts which may provide important information about educational and economic systems.
>
> (Watkins 1984, p. 71)

An extensive social network operates to the advantage of C.B.C. pupils relative to other job seekers. This circumstance is highly ironic given the founding mission of serving needy Catholics who were disadvantaged in employment and access to positions of status because of discrimination and Protestant patronage. This was the reason for the emphasis in Brothers' schools upon examination results which were thought to be fair measures of effort and ability. Catholic entrance to the public service was encouraged since selection was by public examination – one of the few means by which prejudice and patronage could be avoided. Yet a C.B.C. network now extends patronage to its own.

The recently instituted, and quickly expanded, work experience program contributes to an extension of both C.B.C.'s network and its status as a producer of cultural capital. Through this program:

> The discipline of the school is legitimated and substantiated by the 'reality' of the business world with which students come into contact during work experience. In addition this reality is

> reinforced by the influence of cultural resources such as religious affinities, social contact, and the old boy network in gaining entry into the labour market. In this way their daily life experiences influence, interact, and renegotiate their lifetime patterns and expectations.
>
> (Watkins 1984, pp. 75–6)

The internalisation of values that are held dear by capital leads to jobs and, although less so in times of economic contraction than expansion, to promotion within the firm (Salaman 1979; Collins 1979; Edwards 1979). Thus, even though C.B.C. leavers may 'go down a few rungs' from the lofty expectations of some of their parents, for the present they are getting jobs while many of their contemporaries from other schools, state high and technical schools, are missing out. At the local level, however, this may have less to do with the 'academic advantage' that some Brothers believe C.B.C. confers on pupils than with a cultural ethos of discipline and compliance that is valued by both the school and the firm. Again, therefore, the radical movement in the ongoing attempt to transform the socio-economic location of Catholics and the conditions of Catholic working-class life, while not entirely lost, is considerably diluted, since the educational mission of C.B.C. promotes compliance with the class relations implicit in capitalism and embraces an uncritical view of present social and economic structures within which individuals compete for places. Thus, the rungs of the social ladder can be gained only by outreaching contemporaries. Other individuals (rather than the social hierarchy) are challenged.

This section has examined the relationship between the Newburyport job market and the cultural traits that are emphasised by a C.B.C. education. In the following section, the analysis of the connections between schooling and the economic order is extended through an examination of school practices which, through the management of knowledge in particular, contribute to a form of social control.

C.B.C. and the competitive academic curriculum

Various institutionalised educational practices, evident at C.B.C. and elsewhere, are argued to help sustain and legitimate the existing social structure and dominant culture in which the interests of only some groups of citizens are advanced. In this section, the management of knowledge at C.B.C. is discussed in relation to the prevailing social and economic order through an examination of, firstly, the C.B.C. curriculum, and secondly, the

processes of pedagogy and evaluation which govern access to what is regarded as high-status knowledge.

It is in the day-to-day practices of schooling, in the message systems of curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation (Bernstein 1977) that education is shown to be a less than neutral enterprise.

The hegemonic curriculum and cultural politics

The concept of hegemony has been an important one in explaining the linkages between independently creative actions of human agents in C.B.C. and the patterns of social and economic structures to which they are dialectically related. This monograph has attempted to examine the operation of hegemony at the institutional level of C.B.C. since:

> ideological hegemony, as a part of the actual workings of control, is not something one sees only on the level of macro-social behaviour and economic relations; nor is it something that resides merely at the top of our heads, so to speak. Instead, hegemony is constituted by our very day to day practices. It is our whole assemblage of common-sense meanings and actions that make up the social world as we know it, a world in which the internal curricular, teaching and evaluative characteristics of educational institutions partake.
>
> (Apple 1982, pp. 39–40)

In such instances, 'by the very nature of the institution, the educator [is] involved, whether he or she [is] conscious of it or not, in a political act' (Apple 1979, p. 1). As Apple emphasises:

> I find this of exceptional import when thinking about the relationships between the overt and covert knowledge taught in schools, the principles of selection and organization of that knowledge, and the criteria and modes of evaluation used to 'measure success' in teaching. As Young and Bernstein, among others, have provocatively maintained, the structuring of knowledge and symbol in our educational institutions is intimately related to the principles of social and cultural control in a society.
>
> (Apple 1979, p. 2)

Christian Brothers College conserves the dominant hegemony in these ways, and, as was discussed in the previous section, especially by its mechanistic view of its relationship with the economic sector whereby the school unproblematically strives to domesticate, select and certify a compliant labour force. Moreover, by encouraging the false assumption that education is able to redress social inequalities and lead to economic rewards commensurate with ability and effort, C.B.C. actually promotes inequality in the guise of fairness and neutrality (Bourdieu 1977a, 1977b). Of pupils passing through schooling, 'those who are

successful in the system acquire legitimate domination, while those who are unsuccessful acquire a sense of legitimacy and inevitability of their own subordination' (Collins 1981, p. 176).

The reproduction of social and economic privilege over generations is far from absolute, however, and an important point is that C.B.C. is perceived to have contributed to a real improvement of the relative social positions of its clients over time. But such status improvement, although genuine, is achieved by individuals in an institution which assiduously grooms candidates for advancement and which, moreover, does this in a way that also fulfils the school's ideological function of legitimation of predominant political and economic values. The particular education that is offered is misrecognised as being 'neutral'. This is a further illustration of Bourdieu's notion of 'symbolic violence'.

Symbolic violence acts especially through the hegemonic curriculum and in the manner in which 'achievement' is measured within the confines of that narrow selection of knowledge that counts as valid. Curriculum controls the content of formal schooling, and evaluation ensures the compliance of all those pupils who trust that their individual life chances will be enhanced by the accumulation of satisfactory reports and marks that indicate mastery of curriculum content. Such an approach to curriculum and evaluation encourages the individual commitment of pupils to competition with their peers for academic success and advancement.

Despite the efforts of some teachers to the contrary, the curriculum that prevails at C.B.C. is one that Connell and his colleagues (1982) call the 'competitive academic curriculum'. It is a curriculum which measures its success against the achievement of standards, especially the H.S.C., and as such must be guarded and supported by a system of assessment which 'weeds out' at each level those pupils who are deemed as unsuitable material for the next level. It is also a curriculum which prescribes the activities and issues which are considered appropriate for classrooms.

Those who fail in this process of selective advancement are taught to blame no one else but themselves and are prepared to accept 'a second class position in a culture imposed on them' (Wood 1984, p. 225). In a similar manner each student who succeeds, who successfully manages to negotiate each cut-off point, perceives that his individual talent and effort have been rewarded. These students, therefore, recognise as legitimate the criteria by which they are deemed successful and, in accepting the values that are inherent in the hegemonic curriculum, become more like each other and less like their diverse backgrounds (Bourdieu & Passeron

1977). This means that at each cut-off point teachers who conduct assessments have progressively even less cause to question the assumed neutrality of the assessment procedures (Bourdieu & Saint-Martin 1974). The unquestioned acceptance of the necessity for evaluation, of the criteria upon which it is based, and of the individualistic and competitive ethos on which it relies, provides a justification for the inequalities that are an integral part of the capitalist division of labour. At C.B.C. curriculum and evaluation have historically been narrowly pursued and mechanically implemented in the effort to achieve academic success and social status within the existing order. There, the 'hidden' curriculum, 'the tacit teaching of social and economic norms and expectations' (Apple 1979, p. 44), is openly and instrumentally pursued.

The competitive academic curriculum pervades C.B.C. and, as Ashenden et al. (1983) write of such a curriculum:

> Its chemistry was made in the meeting of an elite academic curriculum with a mass clientele organised around individual competition . . . But while everyone, or nearly everyone, had access to this curriculum at some stage or another, it never became the *only* curriculum. It became, rather, hegemonic . . . It attracted the best resources, the greatest prestige. It defined what education *really* meant, and made its rivals seem inferior. It pushed its challengers to the margins of school life – to cater to the younger children, the 'failures', to offer 'electives'.
>
> (Ashenden et al. 1983, p.9)

At C.B.C. the only public alternative to the competitive academic curriculum is the Year 11 transition course. But it is a pathetically weak rival. The boys who take the alternative course have been 'cooled out' (Clarke 1960) from the competitive academic curriculum and so have 'chosen', on the basis of assessments and teacher recommendations, that they do not wish to attempt the H.S.C. As was seen at several points throughout the readings, the channelling of poor H.S.C. risks into the alternative course at Year 11 level minimises failures in the final H.S.C. results by which C.B.C. itself is largely assessed in the local community. This feature of the transition course seemed to be prominent in the thinking of Brother Carter and several teachers who otherwise had little regard for the notion of alternative courses. In response to some recent poor performances in the H.S.C. examinations, there had also been moves to tighten entry requirements to Year 12.

The general narrowness of the C.B.C. curriculum in which, teachers suggest, 'everything is geared to the H.S.C.', illustrates a point made by Giroux:

> By linking power and culture, Bourdieu provides a number of insights into how the hegemonic curriculum works in schools, pointing to the political interests underlying the selection and distribution of those bodies of knowledge that are given top priority. These bodies of knowledge not only legitimate the interests and values of the dominant classes, they also have the effect of marginalizing and disconfirming other kinds of knowledge . . .
>
> (Giroux 1983a, p. 268)

The priority and status of certain types of knowledge in the C.B.C. curriculum, and the connections between the emphasis upon such knowledge and the maintenance of dominant social and economic structures, requires closer examination.

Access to high status knowledge

Clearly, the knowledge which receives 'top priority' at C.B.C. is that required for academic success in mathematics and science. This is a matter of contention for some humanities teachers as the most able students select or are guided into the higher status subjects whose teachers maintain relatively demanding entrance requirements at the Year 11 and, especially, the Year 12 levels. This means that humanities subjects suffer from a double disadvantage—they are perceived as being of lower status and they cater in many cases for students who fail to meet the requirements for entry to the science stream.

The emphasis and status given to mathematics and science knowledge in the C.B.C. curriculum is related to the wider social and economic structures in at least two ways. Firstly, as has been seen, it is through testing in all curriculum areas, but especially in mathematics and science, that decisions about pupil chances for their subsequent school careers are made. Such testing occurs at several 'cut-off points'. Since a major purpose of schooling is to allocate pupils to a hierarchy of status and opportunity:

> the constitutive or underlying social and economic rules make it essential that subject-centred curricula be taught, that high status be given to technical knowledge. This is in large part due to the selection function of schooling . . . it is easier to stratify individuals according to 'academic criteria' when technical knowledge is used . . . Thus the cultural content (legitimate or high status knowledge) is used as a device or filter for economic stratification, thereby enhancing the continued expansion of technical knowledge . . . as well.
>
> (Apple 1979, p. 38)

Apple's last point is related to the second way in which the emphasis on technical knowledge serves wider social and economic purposes. As Apple (1979) explains, the *production* of the particular commodity of high status knowledge is of more concern than its distribution. Just as it is efficient in a capitalist economy to maintain at least a minimum level of unemployment so that a shortage of jobs will stimulate competition for employment, so the premium of high status knowledge is available only to those who are successful in the competition to gain access to it. High status knowledge 'is seen as macro-economically beneficial' (Apple 1979, p. 38) to society's ruling classes over time since:

> with the growing power of the new petty bourgeoisie in the economic and cultural apparatus, the focus on technical administrative knowledge enables the school to do two things. It increases its own legitimacy in the eyes of this crucial class segment and, just as importantly, it enables this same class segment to *use the educational apparatus to reproduce itself.*
>
> (Apple 1982, p. 54)

The reproduction of domination through the production of technical knowledge at schools like C.B.C. is achieved partly through the maintenance of a distinction between mental and manual labour – 'a distinction that lies at the heart of the social division of labour' (Apple 1982, p. 50). Browne claims that the reproduction of this distinction 'represents one of the central structural forces impinging on the school and defining its role and limits' (Browne 1981, p. 460). The distinction is all the more effectively maintained because the relative autonomy of the school, especially C.B.C. as an independent school, from production allows the 'mystique of knowledge and the superiority of mental labour' (Browne 1981, p. 460) to remain unquestioned. Inherent in such an approach to curriculum is the further separation of the knowledge taught in schools, which is seen as an abstract commodity, from the actual life experience of pupils. Within 'a fairly uniform and rigid pacing and sequencing of the learning process', the competitive academic curriculum 'emphasizes the separation of the experience and knowledge of the learner from what is to be learned; and the separation of learning from activity or practice' (Ashenden et al. 1983, p. 9). Hence, C.B.C.'s physics teacher uses experiments only rarely, and then merely to *demonstrate* scientific 'laws' that the pupils have already been taught and have learnt. Similarly, senior English students study *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as a literary piece to be critiqued in the appropriate style, but without connecting Huck's life and experiences with their own.

Each pupil must battle to master the competitive academic curriculum since, as Giroux maintains, 'education is defined primarily through a struggle for economic success and individual mobility' (1984a, p. 191). The interpersonal competition which is enshrined in such a definition:

> inhibits challenge to the social formation through mass transformation of individual identities. Competition reinforces privatized identity and makes the coordination of collective activities and commitment to common goals difficult. Competition anchors individual identity in difference, hierarchizes difference, and diverts energies from perceiving common needs and goals.
> (Wexler & Whitson 1982, p. 37)

The individualism and competition of such a position is strengthened at C.B.C. by the emphasis upon order and discipline. And the maintenance of order, as several teachers who have tried to reform student–teacher relationships at the school have discovered, requires the sort of effort that, according to Mitchell's (1981) study of public school teachers, frequently destroys 'the social relationships of trust and openness needed to encourage student to question, challenge and inquire for themselves – thus destroying an essential prerequisite of the educational mission itself' (Mitchell 1981, p. 2).

The very presence at C.B.C. of teachers who are attempting to introduce curricular and pedagogic reforms demonstrates that curriculum and control are not entirely monolithic at the school. But two generations of pupils and parents have developed a construct of the type of teacher and teaching which is appropriate in 'a Brothers' school'. Both lay teachers and some Brothers were seen to feel trapped by institutional expectations that were pushing them into becoming a type of teacher that they did not wish to be. Alternative strategies to the imposition of discipline, 'work' and narrow curriculum content were often interpreted by pupils, not as positive reforms, but as 'softness'. Only a minority of teachers attempted reform or even thought critically about the possibility of alternatives to an imposed, competitive academic curriculum. And those teachers who were attempting to implement moderate reforms, even in the publicly tolerated transition course, defined themselves in opposition to the institutionalised image of a Brothers' school and the traditions of order and academic intimidation which were believed to have produced outstanding examination results. In the main, however, the competitive academic curriculum is not questioned – by teachers, pupils, or parents.

Such a curriculum is in harmony with C.B.C.'s orderly image. There is no doubt that substantial reappraisal of it, anything more than merely the tampering with the edges or small pieces of it that individual teachers are attempting to do at present, would have implications for a number of other issues which would be brought to the surface. In particular, forms of pedagogy and evaluation, and the nature of teacher-pupil relationships, would need to be addressed in any curriculum review. And even the fundamental notions upon which curriculum and assessment at C.B.C. are based would become subject to scrutiny.

One such notion is that of C.B.C. as an 'academic' school. While there is evidence that this conception is contested at C.B.C., the formalisation of the TOLA 'qualifying test' (see Smith's paper in this monograph), the barriers to promotion from level to level and the consequent 'weeding out' of some pupils, as well as recent moves to restrict entry into Years 11 and 12, suggest attempts to reinforce the 'standards' upon which C.B.C.'s academic reputation is based. This reputation is further supported by the 'no frills' curriculum that guides pupils towards H.S.C. An emphasis upon marks rather than understanding suggests, however, that the school can be seen as 'academic' in only the narrowest sense. Intellectual concerns are reduced to a functional, mechanistic production of credentials. And while such an orientation can be seen as continuing the Brothers' historical mission of educating Catholic boys for social and career advancement, the competitive selection and promotion of pupils calls into question the most fundamental tradition of all of the Christian Brothers—that of service to the needy. Another of the ironies of education at C.B.C. is that the school's entrance and zoning policy tends to exclude those children who could most readily be regarded as needy, economically, intellectually and spiritually. The needy are now deemed unacceptable for entrance to C.B.C. And, in a more subtle denial of service to the needy, the generally wholehearted and unreflective support of the hegemonic curriculum, with its associated practices of pedagogy and evaluation, has been shown to entrench a social order in which the disadvantaged are blamed for their lowly position on the social and economic scale because of their possession of too few and inappropriate cultural resources.

C.B.C. unhesitatingly embraces the curricular knowledge that is required for success at H.S.C. This is clearly a case of traditional education of the type critiqued by Giroux:

> The rationality that dominates traditional views of schooling and curriculum is rooted in the narrow concerns for effectiveness, behavioural objectives, and principles of learning that treat

> knowledge as something to be consumed and schools as merely instructional sites designed to pass onto students a 'common' culture and set of skills that will enable them to operate effectively in the wider society.
>
> (Giroux 1984b, p. 36)

Within such rationality, knowledge is regarded as a commodity to be accumulated by students who are seen as 'passive receptors rather than active producers or expressors – exactly the role they are expected to play politically' (Wood 1984, p. 229). Knowledge that is deemed appropriate for the hegemonic curriculum is largely treated as objective fact and is divorced from its human origin so that teachers and students are unlikely to consider that such knowledge can be regarded as problematic or even can be reinterpreted. Thus, the sense of agency of pupils and teachers is reduced as they confront a factual and cultural world that is 'perceived and explained by others as being finalized' (Bowers 1976, p. 62). The production of high status, technical knowledge, in particular, contributes to the dominant ideology of technocratic consciousness which reifies science and regards technological progress as unproblematic. This legitimates the power of dominant groups in society and works to 'impede making the foundations of society the object of thought and reflection' (Habermas 1971, pp. 111–2).

The autonomy of teachers at C.B.C. is especially limited by the demands of the H.S.C. curriculum which stretches its tentacles down even to the most junior levels of the school. This curriculum reigns supreme despite marginal challenges to it and despite the fact that less than a third of C.B.C. pupils proceed to tertiary studies, for which H.S.C. is required, upon leaving the school. Yet the high status of H.S.C., especially of mathematics and science at that level, ensures that the school attempts to produce that commodity as effectively as possible and, in the process, holds out high status knowledge as the most worthy form of knowledge that all should strive to gain. By stratifying students on the basis of such knowledge, C.B.C. plays its part in 'fitting students to the preexisting roles for them in the cultural, political and economic matrix of post industrial capitalism' (Wood 1984, p. 228).

Again, it is in the area of religious education that a potential challenge to the processes of the hegemonic curriculum is discernible. Some teachers of religion, particularly younger lay teachers, are attempting to develop a 'post-Vatican' spirit of community and inquiry in their classes. Such an approach avoids the simple presentation or imposition of 'correct' religious knowledge and encourages instead open discussion and a common search for values that are appropriate to a faith community based upon broad

Christian principles of social justice. These teachers are conscious of the incompatibility of physical intimidation as a form of discipline with the notion of an inquiring and sharing faith community. In such a community authority relations would be based upon mutual respect rather than fear and coercion. Women teachers, in growing numbers, have taken a lead in challenging intimidatory disciplinary practices and transforming teacher-pupil relations. They have also challenged the predominantly patriarchal culture and values of C.B.C. by their very competence. But the successful implementation of innovation cannot be achieved at C.B.C. without considerable struggle. Both parents and pupils expect teachers to conform to a stereotype. Innovators must first, win at least passive tolerance from the C.B.C. administration, and then overcome not only institutionalised expectations of a 'Brothers' school' but also pupil expectations of a 'good teacher'.

This section has attempted to explain the relationship between everyday life at C.B.C. and the reproduction of society through an examination of the school's message systems of curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation. Although current practices are challenged in some quarters of the school, there is a broad acceptance amongst most teachers, pupils and parents of a competitive, selective process of education which guides individual pupils towards an uncritical acceptance of the status quo. Education at C.B.C. is geared to H.S.C. success. Curricular knowledge, especially high status technical knowledge, is regarded as unproblematic. In this way, not only are current social arrangements and the power of dominent groups legitimated, but also neither pupils nor teachers are given any sense of their own human agency.

Individual autonomy within institutional control

This monograph has so far examined the social control of pupils at C.B.C. by means of an emphasis upon the upward social mobility of 'successful' pupils, placement in the job market, and curricular, pedagogical and evaluative processes which encourage a competitive, individuated approach to schooling. Each of these factors has a tendency to reproduce social patterns of wealth and status. Such social reproduction is achieved at C.B.C. through the largely uncritical acceptance by the majority of teachers of the supposed neutrality and legitimacy of the school practices which are emphasised. One task of this section is to show how the symbolic forms of control displayed by teachers towards pupils

necessitates various similar forms of control over the teachers themselves. The essential point, however, is that such control is never absolute. The section therefore examines the nature of institutional control at C.B.C., and then considers the possiblity of transformation of authority relations within the school.

Authority and autonomy at C.B.C.

It is clear that although control of pupils, teachers and the curriculum seems pervasive and uniform at C.B.C., numerous individual initiatives could be cited. It was found, indeed, that control existed most obviously in symbolic displays and rhetoric rather than actual practices. Thus, for instance, staff meetings are largely comprised of Brother Carter's monologues on the topic of control—but teachers parody his presentation and his directives in the sanctuary of the lay teachers' work room, and most of them continue as before in their own classrooms. Details of curriculum content and yearly syllabus plans are to be collated by subject co-ordinators and delivered to the headmaster each year—but the syllabus statements bear little relationship to what teachers actually do with their classes. No one checks them, and some teachers are unaware of their existence. The prevalence of a rhetoric that suggests rigid control and punitive action against wayward teachers was especially apparent in Brother Carter's numerous comments about the desirability of firing certain teachers, especially those who regarded themselves as 'curriculum people'. Yet although many lay teachers seemed insecure about their jobs, teaching performance was inspected only in the case of the most junior classroom teachers. Subject and area co-ordination was seen to be virtually non-existent.

All of this suggests that 'the Brothers' system' is not holding up particularly well at C.B.C. The analysis indicates, in fact, that system perspectives of organisation are inadequate to explain the C.B.C. case. More useful explanations are found in the work of Giddens (1979, 1981), theorists of organisational paradigms and culture (Brown 1978; Smircich 1983), and in critical administration theory (Bates 1984; Forester 1983).

Despite the numerous examples of individual autonomy throughout the ethnography, C.B.C. is clearly not a case of organisational anarchy. Isolated individual intitiatives, while they clearly demonstrate that control is never absolute nor entirely one-directional, do not displace ingrained authority relations, which remain largely intact. This is indicated by the predominance of Christian Brothers in administrative positions even though they comprise only 20% of the staff. It is most clearly illustrated in the

headmaster's pursuit of authoritarian control over his teachers and the school. Principal–teacher interactions at C.B.C. are analogous to teacher–student interactions (c.f. Hansen 1979; Hunter 1980), and communication tends to be in one direction, from superior to subordinate. This is apparent in the conduct of staff meetings and in principal–teacher exchanges in the playground before the start of the school day. Teachers, both religious and lay, expressed regret and frustration during the course of the study that Brother Carter openly shared with the researcher information that had been denied to them. They were disappointed that they, as members of the regular staff, were outside of this kind of communication and relationship with an individual whose position is important to their professional lives. Moreover, the denial of such information to teachers clearly gives Brother Carter a further measure of control over the school and staff.

It was noticeable that Brother Carter's staff meetings are preoccupied with matters which are related to the control of teachers and pupils. He is clearly a proponent of what Young & Beardsley (1968, p. 182) call 'the Rule-directed Rule', the rule that everyone must follow rules and comply with a superior's directions. Lay teachers, especially, are warned that they must work within a 'framework' and not attempt to 'shift the boundaries' which are marked by Brother Carter according to his own interpretation of the traditions of his Order, and in conjunction with the priorities for C.B.C. that he has set.

It is often assumed that power in schools is hierarchically structured. Such assumptions were particularly apparent at Christian Brothers College where it is common to hear talk of 'a good strong boss', 'running a tight ship' and of teachers who 'have got good control'. In such a situation, however:

> The idea of 'some' having control over 'others' suggests an acceptance of the principle of control as a fundamental component of organizational life, and this acceptance is clearly grounded in a belief that it is 'the done thing', and a part of 'what everyone knows'.
>
> (Golding 1980, p. 772)

But such common-sense understandings can lead administrators and teachers, and also pupils, to perform their school duties on the basis of a false conception of the nature of power. Such language and beliefs reinforce a distorted view of power as something that can be possessed by individuals (Knights & Roberts 1982) whereas, as Greenfield argues:

> Power lies in relationships among people. Organizations are expressions of these relationships and are therefore instruments of power. The organization is a tool that enables (more or less) some

> people to do what they want and that requires others to participate in the realization of others' desires, wants, beliefs and purposes. In this sense, organizations are tools for action. They do what some people want to see done and they do it by enlisting or compelling the participation of individuals so that their efforts and talents produce what other people want.
>
> (Greenfield 1983, p. 40)

This suggests that what appears superficially in C.B.C. as order and stability – an essential aspect of 'the Brothers' system' in which units fit neatly into the school's collective organisation – shrouds 'the possibility of illegitimate power by assuming consensus where there may only be compliance' (Knights & Roberts 1982, p. 47) that is gained by a form of coercion in which superiors view subordinates in an instrumental fashion. Brother Carter, in the belief that he is maintaining the tradition of being 'a good strong boss', crosses well over the boundary between legitimate authority and arbitrary power. And, as Pusey warns about the exercise of arbitrary power:

> This creates specially oppressive pressures on people in subordinate positions . . . [as] problems and failures in the vertical relationships between levels in the hierarchy create feelings of personal vulnerability and dependence throughout the system.
>
> (Pusey 1980, p. 49)

Brother Carter clearly views his power as principal, not as something that arises out of the quality of his relationship with his staff, but as a property simply of his position in a hierarchy of control. Despite his claim that his 'door is always open', Brother Carter's *personal* distance from most of his staff precludes any possibility of his developing what Knights & Roberts (1982, p. 55) call *authoritative* rather than authoritarian power relationships. Authoritative relationships require a *personal* relationship between administrator and staff in which:

> the possibility of a real consensus is not ruled out of existence by the domination of coercion and compromise. Instead there is a commitment to a form of practice that through dialogue (Habermas 1972) generates an acceptance rather than a self-defeating avoidance or denial of the interdependence of action.
>
> (Knights & Roberts 1982, p. 51)

Thus, while Brother Carter struggles to impose his own definition of school reality upon C.B.C., teachers exercise their own creative human agency in ways which both support and undermine that definition.

The type of school that Brother Carter wants C.B.C. to be is his own idealised version of the paradigm of 'a Brothers' school'. This concept of an organisation as a paradigm is explained by Brown:

> By paradigm we refer to those sets of assumptions, usually implicit, about what sorts of things make up the world, how they act, how they hang together, and how they may be known . . . (The) tacit intersubjective property of paradigms constitutes in effect the 'agreement' between members that enables the orderly production of role enactment. That is, the structuring of organizational interaction requires members to rely upon shared but largely tacit background knowledge that is embodied in an organizational paradigm. Roles as well as the definition of 'problems', 'responsible opinion', 'leadership', and so on, are afforded by the dominant model.
>
> (Brown 1978, pp. 373–4)

The features of the Brothers' school paradigm are not held at C.B.C. by Brother Carter alone but are shared, with greater or lesser variations, by his fellow religious, parents and pupils, those teachers who are former Christian Brothers, teachers who have worked at the school for a number of years, and by teachers who are former pupils of C.B.C. or other Brothers' schools. In such circumstances, the Brothers appear as a school elite whose rational-legal authority is supported by their monopoly of ownership and administration of the school, and is extended by the history, traditions and sagas of Brothers and Brothers' schools. In both of these ways the authority of the Brothers at C.B.C., and of Brother Carter who is attempting to follow in the footsteps of the 'great men' of the Order, is legitimated and ritualised. Their authority remains strong despite their minority presence. Thus, the dominant approach to school administration at C.B.C., by stressing the precedence of traditional organisational patterns over individual involvement, encourages an uncritical acceptance of the dominance of pre-existing structures of the 'Brothers' school' paradigm. Such an approach leads to an exaggerated conception of the power of such structures. Thus, many teachers are expected to act out roles that they have not shaped. They must imitate institutional expectations or face the disapproval and possible sanctions of Brother Carter and other supporters of the dominant 'Brothers' school' paradigm, including parents and pupils.

The experience of working within organisational expectations or traditions may lead to the further acceptance of organisational practices and organisational power as natural. On the other hand, it can also lead to the partial penetration of formerly accepted practices. The latter was the case, for instance, when a long-serving ex-Brother, John Carlton, began to regard the much-vaunted expectation that lay teachers be 'committed' to the school as being a form of exploitation because the commitment of such teachers was not matched by any genuine sharing or contribution to decision making. Teachers are expected to dedicate

themselves to a cause which they are unable to influence. In Carlton's case, a critical incident, when he began to see through the manipulative reality of the Brothers' minority control (cf. Knights & Roberts 1982, p. 59), occurred when Brother Carter, as newly arrived principal, unilaterally reversed several decisions that had been made by the previous administration. A similar realisation was expressed by another lay teacher, Heather Verdun, in the form:

> It's all very well to (ask you to) be dedicated and to give you extra duties to do—and then to cut you off from any say in the place. If you try and do anything they (the C.B.C. administration) just cut you off at the ankles.

This insight was prompted partly by Brother Carter's obvious disapproval of attempts by Jim Karn to foster discussion about curriculum and authority relations. The rhetoric of duty, obligation and commitment was seen by these teachers as a 'manipulative trap' (cf. Watkins 1986) which is designed to facilitate the acceptance of the organisational practice of minority control as natural, and to legitimate the reproduction of the social system of the organisation, that is, to reproduce the Christian Brothers paradigm.

Although some Brothers would prefer more genuine sharing of responsibilities with lay staff, at present the administration of C.B.C. is still dominated by Brothers who seem insecure as a result of the loss of their numerical predominance on the staff. They hang on grimly to formal administrative positions in the hope that such 'presence' will sustain 'a Brothers' stamp' upon the school as well as something of the predictability and comfortable certainty of the Brothers' 'golden age'. Their suspicions of lay teachers, who may render problematic accepted aspects of the established paradigm, coupled with the view of many lay teachers that they are denied a role in shaping a new or revised paradigm, impedes attempts to establish co-operative relationships.

On changing the 'system'

In the bygone days when the Brothers' world was relatively certain, before the mass defections from the Order, the challenges to the old 'religious certainties' of Vatican II, and the influx of lay teachers into Brothers' schools, the comfortable unity of purpose, of values and of the mission of the Order was underwritten by an obsession with control and obedience. Brothers' traditions and values were supported by the training of novices in their religious and educational duties within Brothers' training institutions. But control was never absolute even in those generally fondly remembered days when a Brother's life closely resembled that in a

'total institution' (cf. Goffman 1959). Submission to the authority of superiors and obedience to 'the Rule' was even then a matter a choice despite the coercive nature of authority relations for, as Knights & Roberts maintain:

> At first glance, coercion appears to contradict the notion that power is only ever realized in relations *between* people. Thus coercive power appears as something one person *has* over another, and for those coerced it is often seen or described in terms of the denial or removal of individual choice. Nevertheless, this mechanistic view of coercion is ultimately untenable, for, as Giddens notes, however wide the asymmetrical distribution of resources involved all power relations manifest autonomy and dependence in both directions (Giddens 1979, p. 119). By virtue of being self-conscious creatures, individuals always retain some control over their action, and coercion can therefore never become an automatic process through which one person gains complete control over another. At the very least, coercion requires the *active* submission of one person to another . . .
>
> (Knights & Roberts 1982, pp. 49–50).

Giddens (1982) regards this as a 'dialectic of control' in which, no matter how imbalanced relations of autonomy or dependence may be, those in apparently dependent positions can often convert their limited resources into 'some degree of control over the conditions of reproduction of the system' (Giddens 1982, p. 32). It is in this realisation that the potential power of human agents to transform even the most institutionalised social and cultural situations can be appreciated.

A partial but underdeveloped realisation of such transformative potential can be found in the work of Goffman (1959, 1961) which conveys 'a sense of the potential fluidity and hence fragileness of social realities' (Collins 1981, p. 230). This is because, unlike Parsons (1957, 1960) who sees social order as being based upon shared, internalised values and moral obligations, Goffman sees social order as a more arbitrary and tentative construction in which individuals exert moral and material pressure on each other to conform in the continual reconstruction in specific situations of a consistent definition of reality. In this case there is an external rather than an internal morality that governs the behaviour of individuals in social situations, and, in order to live up to this external morality, individuals often maintain the *impression* that they are conforming to the required rules and standards. They become manipulative performers in a two-sided version of social life (Collins 1981). Backstage, the 'true' self may harbour reservations about institutional or social life, but frontstage, each individual must in a completely amoral way perform as if she or

he were a dedicated and committed member of the particular moral order (Goffman 1959).

It is backstage at C.B.C., in individual classrooms or in the sanctuary of the lay teachers' work room, that individual autonomy most clearly operates. Thus, despite what appears to be the imposition of a paradigmatic reality by the Christian Brothers' administration and those who support the traditional definition of a Brothers' school, the sense of unity and stability is illusory. For instance, decision making at C.B.C., although formally in the hands of Brother Carter, is often of a type that Brown (1978) has noted in industry. Such decisions represent:

> a choice between options within the official paradigm that management has established. Yet at the same time that this 'decision making' is going on, a subtle, diffuse, hierarchically low-level complex of negotiations is being enacted. What emerges from these subterranean activities is a redefinition of the official paradigm in the very process of its application.
>
> (Brown 1978, p. 376)

Thus, not directly confronted by dissidents, decisions made unilaterally by Brother Carter may be pragmatically adhered to or circumvented privately by teachers. While appearing to conform, teachers may express their indifference or hostility to decisions or to institutionalised standards or expectations when meeting 'backstage'. Thus, as Giddens writes of Goffman's analysis of institutions:

> The existence of front/back discriminations normally indicates substantial *discursive penetration* of the insitutional forms within which interaction is carried on.
>
> (Giddens 1979, p. 208)

Goffman's analysis of human behaviour as calculated performances suggests that organisational actors do indeed penetrate the presumed neutrality of social life. Yet, according to Grumet, 'Goffman's theatre is bad theatre [in which] . . . human action and conflict are predictable and repetitious confirmations of the status quo. . .' (Grumet 1980, p. 97–8). She claims:

> The theatre that deserves its name does not merely fill in the spaces of traditional formulas, but is a creative response of particular persons to particular conditions. It is hinged on suspense rather than predictability and harbors the possibility, however slim, that this time the ritual will collapse . . .
>
> (Grumet 1980, p. 98)

Thus, what needs to be added to Goffman's analysis is the sense in which backstage interactions, as is the case at C.B.C., show the knowing penetration of organisational forms. Frontstage behaviour

may indicate a tendency to reproduce instititonalised norms at the very moment at which, backstage, change is fermenting. Such a conception advances the interaction between human agency and social structure (Giddens 1979, 1981, 1982; Watkins 1985) which is essential to any explanation of continuity and change.

Within this dialectic, Dahrendorf regards human agency as being facilitated and constrained by *options* and *ligatures* (1979, pp. 30–1). Options are the possibilities of alternative action within a social structure. Ligatures, however, are the bonds or linkages which connect actors to their established roles and positions within a social structure. In summary, 'Ligatures create bonds and thus the foundations of action; options require choices and thus open for the future' (Dahrendorf 1979, p. 31). In other words, ligatures are reproductive forces while options provide moments of potential resistance or transformation. Or, as Watkins explains:

> Human agents confront and react to organisational structures as a sequence of constrained choices which form an ongoing life-cycle trajectory. These include past, present and future choices which have affected, are affecting or will affect human agency. Because ligatures also have a temporal quality they are the cohesive forces that bind human agents to the social structure or organisation.
>
> (Watkins 1985, p. 12)

At C.B.C. the ligatures that bind Brothers, lay teachers, pupils and parents to an established image of the school are strong ones. There is a sense of the history of the Christian Brothers in Australia and in Newburyport. This is tied to a sense of community amongst Newburyport Catholics and to a sense of personal and family history of its members who have supported C.B.C. since 1932. Such ties influence the choices of C.B.C. actors when possible options emerge. And yet the notion of options embraces Giddens's essential point that 'embodying a conception of action within social theory involves treating the human being as a knowledgeable and capable agent' (Giddens 1982, p. 29) who can transform organisations and, ultimately, society.

A combination of ligatures and options may result in strains and tensions within an organisation which can be resolved only by institutional change. Morgan (1981) explains this dialectical process of continuity and change by employing a 'schismatic' metaphor in relation to organisations instead of the more common metaphor of mechanical or organismic system (Morgan 1981, p. 24). The schismatic system has a tendency towards distintegration as its various factions strive to achieve independence from the system as a whole:

> The very nature of schismatic metaphor emphasizes that 'the system' being studied may represent a somewhat arbitrary and

> problematic construct . . . for the drive towards functional autonomy and the process of schismogenesis can be seen as attempts at escape from the imposition of unwelcome structure and constraint.
>
> (Morgan 1981, p. 33)

The notion of 'system' is not used here in a functionalist sense. In fact, the emphasis on strains and tensions within organisations highlights the contingency of any momentary coherence of institutional arrangements. As Morgan is careful to stress:

> The concept of system from this view must be recognized as an abstract notion which is imposed upon a network of constituent elements, the artificiality and arbitrariness of which is emphasized in the strains, tensions and conflicts which emerge as system elements drive towards fission.
>
> (Morgan 1981, p. 33)

From this point of view systems exist only in their moment-by-moment construction and reconstruction by human agents. Thus, organisational stability or change can be seen as a dialectical process in which actors and structures continually interact in a way which makes transformation possible. Such change, according to Giddens (1981), does not occur as an ongoing, gradual, evolutionary process but in irregular 'episodes' in which human actors bring about definite transformation. It could be argued, for instance, that in the life of C.B.C. the opening episode in 1932 contained an element of resistance in its attempt to challenge the Anglo-Protestant domination of society. This initial episode was shortlived, however. In attempting to fit individually upwardly mobile Catholic youths into the established social and economic order, C.B.C.'s oppositional intentions were muted. The episode of resistance became transformed into one of reproduction, stability and social acceptance as C.B.C. participants endeavoured to demonstrate the effectiveness of their school, especially in terms of examination results, in order to place C.B.C. graduates in favourable positions in the job market. Some current developments at the school, particularly the emergence of a more critical approach to curriculum and religious education, may conceivably signal the opening of a new episode of more open authority relations and social questioning. The possibility of such transformation is examined in the remainder of this section.

The possibility of transformation at C.B.C.

There is no doubt that those Brothers and lay teachers who wish to implement change at C.B.C. face substantial problems. The emergence of collective rather than individual action which is necessary for any reform movement is impeded in important ways.

Firstly, the communicative action (Habermas 1972) or communicative performances (Pacanowski & O'Donnell-Trujillo 1983), out of which collective critical consciousness and the potential for collective action may grow, must necessarily be rooted in what is perceived to be organisational reality. That is:

> past [communicative] performances imbue the present with their specific meanings while the present, by its reconfiguration of the past, transforms past meanings. In short, communicative performances are situationally and temporally embedded in organisational reality.
>
> (Pacanowski & O'Donnell-Trujillo 1983, p. 133)

The inheritance of past meanings, of traditions, sagas and folklore about the Christian Brothers and C.B.C., has strongly influenced current perceptions of C.B.C. reality. This is immensely important because relationships among C.B.C. participants reflect this inheritance which influences the alternatives, or potential options (Dahrendorf 1979), that each participant sees as being feasible for her or him within a perceived institutional reality. And since the traditional image or paradigm (Brown 1978) of a Brothers' school is so widely held, a surprising number of teachers define themselves in opposition to the predominant paradigm yet, at present, express little hope of establishing any alternative paradigm.

The notion of the Brothers' 'system' is still strong and is sustained by the visibility of Brothers in administrative positions, the Brothers' 'stamp' upon C.B.C., and in a host of minor ways such as the annual inspection by the Brother Visitor. Despite the minority of Brothers on staff and the shifting values *within* the Order, the Brothers' system retains the appearance of an objective reality. Thus individually discontented Brothers and lay teachers encounter existing structures as 'the way things are' and may not see them as having been humanly and creatively constructed in a particular way in particular circumstances. For these teachers, as for the advertising sales personnel studied by Knights & Roberts, 'The 'Company' or the 'Organization' almost seemed to take on the form of an alien entity which had a life of its own, was driven by mysterious forces, and which constrained and restricted the individuals in it' (Knights & Roberts 1982, p. 60). By failing to recognise the human origins of structures, actors are less likely to feel that they can be reinterpreted or viewed as problematic (Bowers 1976). Hence the individual's sense of agency is reduced. By submitting in a frontstage manner to institutionalised expectations at C.B.C., in spite of personal inclinations to the contrary and personal penetration of the exploitation or injustice of

such expectations, these participants must in some way justify their actions (cf. Denhardt 1977). By blaming the school, the Brothers, the principal, the system, or Catholicism, personal responsibility is transferred to an impersonal bureaucracy. But the attempted transfer of responsibility represents a denial of the power of human agency. As a result individuals feel powerless to change things beyond their personal domains in which they may exercise autonomy (cf. Spencer-Hall 1982). Despite their dissatisfaction with present arrangements, even those who most want change at C.B.C. see substantial change as being within the domain only of the principal. This explains the fond hope that Brother Carter's replacement will be a 'curriculum man' and that under his administration important issues may be addressed.

The vocal dissatisfaction of a number of teachers at C.B.C. illustrates Wexler & Whitson's point that, in reaction to perceived stagnation and a sense of powerlessness, 'critical analyses of collective sources of frustration may be diverted to interpersonal critiques' (Wexler & Whitson 1982, p. 37). C.B.C. seems to be a case in which:

> Where competition is salient, the potential for critique degenerates into what Jules Henry (1963) called 'carping criticism' . . . Competition also destroys the mutual respect and trust which are prerequisites for undistorted communication.
>
> (Wexler & Whitson 1982, p. 37)

The most significant point about such a situation of interpersonal criticism and competition is that, by promoting distorted communication, it limits any possibility of common social action.

This point is appreciated in critical administrative theory (Bates 1984; Forester 1983; Foster 1980; Watkins 1983) which:

> seeks to show the practical, moral and political significance of particular communicative actions, speech acts and non-verbal communications more generally. It also investigates how a given social structure may itself be a structure of systematically distorted communicative actions that practically and subtly shape its members lives.
>
> (Forester 1983, p. 235)

Therefore, structural relations of power and status influence and distort communication and give it particular, situated meanings in organisational contexts. It is through communicative interaction that relations of co-operation, consent or coercion are actively constructed, and institutional understandings of appropriate behaviour and of what may be treated as problematic are defined. Yet:

> organizations may do more than structure practical communicative claims. They may systematically distort those pragmatic claims upon their members' attention . . . [However] organizational distortions may not be deliberate and calculated, but rather an ongoing inheritance . . .
>
> (Forester 1983, p. 242)

One such distorting inheritance at C.B.C. is the historical legacy of institutionalised authority and hierarchy, with associated expectations of unquestioned obedience and total, uncritical dedication. Within such historical structures and relations of power and authority, Forester argues, 'we may find conditions of dogmatism rather than social learning, tyranny rather than authority, manipulation rather than cooperation, and distraction rather than sensitivity' (1983, p. 239–40). The distortion of communication in such circumstances precludes participants from genuinely contributing to the ongoing process of organising. Yet even within such conditions at C.B.C., established lay teachers have managed to implement innovations and to 'encroach' upon the Brothers' administrative territory and so assume a degree of informal power.

Such examples indicate that the human agency of C.B.C. participants, although it is not fully recognised by them, interacts with organisational structures so that both individuals and the organisation may be regarded as being in a continual state of 'becoming' (Benson 1977; Giddens 1979). As has been discussed, a sense of agency is impeded by distorted communicative structures and C.B.C.'s historical legacy. Moreover, present structures isolate teachers and administrators and limit the possibilities of involvement in democratic decision making or positive social relations. Present policies of unilateral decision making by Brother Carter, coupled with the institutional expectations that are imposed upon staff, are clearly demeaning to teachers. Some of them, especially but not exclusively lay teachers, felt that they were viewed by the Brothers' hierarchy in an instrumental fashion. The reluctance to appoint lay teachers to positions of authority is the most striking illustration of this.

Instead of developing a sense of human agency and an awareness of possibilities for change, teachers at C.B.C. were likely to merely reciprocate what they saw as the administration's instrumental attitude towards them. Thus, two Brothers stated that they were merely 'biding their time' at C.B.C. and awaiting transfer to more acceptable positions. Several lay teachers said that they were seeking employment elsewhere largely because they felt that they had no influence upon the school. Several highly regarded teachers had left for similar reasons. In this sense, C.B.C.

appears to be similar to the companies studied by Knights & Roberts:

> In situations where, at best, one's identity or sense of value as a person is rarely confirmed and, at worst, is constantly and severely threatened or undermined, . . . mental distance, if not complete physical separation, appears to be the only viable solution . . . (for) re-establishing a feeling of personal control in an environment which denies one influence.
>
> (Knights & Roberts 1982, p. 61)

The most common 'solution' at C.B.C. was for teachers to engage in what Harris (1984) regards as 'the most illusory, and eventually the most dangerous 'way out' of such a situation', which is:

> to ignore the structural constraints limiting (rather than determining or over-determining) what they are able to do, and instead to individualise their situation completely and apply themselves more fully to, and concentrate only on *their* lessons, *their* pupils and *their* achievements.
>
> (Harris 1984, p. 48)

Such 'solutions' are illusory because they offer individual responses to what are essentially collective problems (Habermas 1971). Although individuals achieve real, if limited, autonomy in this way, by ignoring the essential interdependence between participants, their individualistic behaviour is ultimately self-defeating (Knights & Roberts 1982, p. 51). While such independent action demonstrates the existence of human agency within institutions, it denies the full realisation of a sense of agency because it fails to recognise either the consequences of individual action upon others or the dialectic in which agency and structure interact.

This section has focused upon the institutional control of teachers at C.B.C., especially through the predominance of institutionalised expectations and the established 'Brothers' school' paradigm. This often subtle form of control was seen to be extremely pervasive and powerful, even in comparison with the principal's direct power of hire and fire and authoritarian style of leadership. Nevertheless, both the authority of the principal and the predominant Brothers' paradigm were seen to be challenged in various ways. Such challenges, although they have resulted in numerous individual initiatives, have yet to alter the school's paradigmatic authority relations and expectations of teachers. The possibility of change in the future, however, remains and is made increasingly likely by the growing sense of crisis that has emerged at the school. This sense of crisis is examined in the following section.

Confronting the future: Uncertainty and crisis at C.B.C.

This section examines the growing sense of crisis and uncertainty at C.B.C. Although the sense of crisis has been precipitated by events beyond Christian Brothers College in Newburyport, the resultant uncertainty has important ramifications within the school. Not the least of these is the realisation by some C.B.C. participants that a crisis has two sides. On one hand the crisis presents a problem. On the other hand it presents an opportunity for reform and change. The possibility of such reform and the difficulties which any reform movement must overcome at C.B.C. are discussed.

There is much confusion and uncertainty amongst the Brothers' community about the future of the Order. The severe decline in the numerical strength of the Christian Brothers, with many defections and few entrants during the past two decades, has caused a dependence on lay teachers to staff the Brothers' schools. This has resulted in much uncertainty about the future of the Order, Brothers' schools and the Brothers' mission. It was apparent during the research that when words like 'crisis' or 'catastrophe' were raised in relation to the future of the Christian Brothers, nods of agreement followed. This point is discussed in the reading by Smith. The sense of crisis within the community of Brothers at C.B.C. in Newburyport, however, has elements other than the feasibility of maintaining the Brothers' enterprise with a declining number of Brothers. Christian Brothers College, along with other Catholic schools, is also facing a crisis of identity which is veiled by the school's superficial stability and uniformity.

Praetz (1982) argues that this crisis of identity has arisen in the late 1970s and 1980s, ironically, because Catholic schools no longer face hostility to their existence but are now generally accepted. This is certainly the case in Newburyport where C.B.C. is highly regarded, especially in the business sector. Praetz notes that other changes have also altered the nature of Catholic education in Australia in the past decade:

> Catholics (by the 1980s) were no longer predominantly working class, excluded from positions of power and authority in Australian society. The Irish character of the Catholic church had also changed . . . Further, in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, Catholics as a social group had become less distinctive in behaviour and belief. The mutual hostility between different denominations has ebbed, resulting in a new flowering of ecumenical co-operation based on the shared affirmation of religious values in a secular pluralist society.
>
> (Praetz 1982, p. 66)

The virtual disappearance of the prejudice and discrimination of which Catholics were victims has removed the oppositional rationale upon which the foundation of C.B.C. was based. As has been discussed, however, the oppositional element in the mission of the Brothers never constituted a radical movement of resistance to the social and economic relations of late capitalism. Nevertheless, the previous marginal and vulnerable social status of Catholics has been greatly modified.

The notion that Brothers in those early days of Catholic victimisation were serving the needy linked C.B.C. to the most important of all traditions of their Order. The sense of purpose that was afforded by such a mission helped to create stability and harmony amongst the religious who comprised virtually the entire staff of the school. Unified in resistance to social arrangements, the Brothers defined their mission in opposition to Protestant power.

The certainty and predictability of the Brothers' traditional institutional life, even relatively recent institutional life of the late 1950s and early 1960s, seem 'pre-modern' in Berger, Berger & Kellner's terms:

> individuals lived in life-worlds that were more or less unified . . . [and] evinced a high degree of integration. Whatever the differences between various sectors of social life, these would 'hang together' in an order of integrating meaning that included them all. This integrating order was typically religious. For the individual this meant quite simply that the *same* integrative symbols permeated the various sectors of his everyday life . . . the individual was always in the same 'world'.
>
> (Berger, Berger & Kellner 1974, p. 62)

Such a 'life-world' for an individual Brother almost always had its origins in a devoutly Catholic upbringing, began to be more definitely shaped throughout schooling in a Brothers' school, and was finally cast in the Brothers' training institutions. It was then sustained in communities by rigorous obedience to the Rules and Constitution of the Order, and also, as discussed above, by a shared sense of purpose and community.

These have now been undermined by the attenuation of the original mission of serving the needy, and by the intrusion of lay outsiders into the Brothers' world. Moreover, some Brothers have, since the early 1960s, found themselves entering more extensively into the wider world, starting with some academic training at universities. This was the beginning of discontent for Brother Ernest, for instance, who nevertheless 'proved his vocation' by remaining in the Order when several of his colleagues, who had shared similar experiences, left. In more recent years, the younger Brothers have received their academic and teacher training in more secular institutions and many have developed values which often

differ from those of their religious elders and superiors. Despite this, it has been seen that the traditional Brothers' paradigm is still predominant at C.B.C. In fact, for a number of Brothers in the mainly elderly community, 'the prototypical ideal [is] identified with a representation of the situation "as it used to be"'(Rein & Shon 1977, p. 242).

To those many Brothers with a deeply held personal commitment to the traditions to which they have dedicated so much of their lives, any change or incursion constitutes a potent threat. For them, 'the "problem" is how to return to the status quo ante' (Rein & Shon 1977, p. 242). Yet this is not in all cases merely a sentimental attachment to the past when life was less complicated, for that early mission involved a sense of purpose and was filling a genuine need. Hence, younger Brothers, also, are attempting to return to the origins of the Order and its early mission in Australia in order to seek new motivation and to realign the mission of the Order with the intentions of the founder. Thus, labels like 'crisis' or 'catastrophe' might be used by conservatives, but, for some Brothers, the changed situation regarding Brothers' schools provides new opportunities rather than constraints. These Brothers talked of new missions which might rekindle the spirit of the founder's apostolate, and of problems of the needy – economic, educational and spiritual.

The various perspectives that are held by Brothers concerning the future of the Order suggest that the Congregation of Christian Brothers is experiencing its own legitimation crisis. Pusey explains that this notion involves reference:

> first, to a *psychological* element inasmuch as legitimation depends in some basic way on subjective perceptions; second, to a *political* element inasmuch as we are concerned with conflicting attempts to secure the legitimacy of rival interests and; third, to the *administrative* functions of government . . .
>
> (Pusey 1980, p. 45)

Both the conservatives within the Order at C.B.C. and those seeking new apostolates are aware that the imperative and legitimating force of their revered traditions is becoming increasingly hollow. The educational experience at C.B.C. exemplifies changed circumstances in which culturally grounded 'interpretative systems', which formerly gave a moral imperative to the older traditions, can no longer be convincingly justified (Habermas 1975; Pusey 1980).

The conservative perspective seems to be currently dominant at C.B.C. but to be losing ground within the Order more generally. Adherents to this perspective see a need to contain the uncertainty

which is provoked by the possibility that established traditions are less relevant to changed circumstances. Hence, a heavy reliance upon the established bureaucratic system of the Order, and upon the authority of Brothers over lay teachers, was apparent at C.B.C. (cf. Crozier 1964). It was noticeable, however, that the system of authority existed more in form than in actual practice. Christian Brothers College maintains an appearance of a traditional Brothers' school. But the orderly veneer does not entirely mask the searching for meaningful solutions, by both Brothers and lay teachers, to troubling educational and administrative issues. The difficulty is that their approach to problem solving, which involves critical reflection and change, is incompatible with the bureaucratic logic of the Order and, more particularly, of the C.B.C. administration.

The uncertainty and potential crisis at C.B.C. is perhaps most clearly revealed in the confused approach to religious education. The teaching of religion in senior grades is almost exclusively the work of the Brothers who, it is felt, do not trust such work to lay teachers. Lay teachers of religion in junior secondary classes believe that they are merely 'plugging gaps'. Only in the primary section of the school does religion and religious education appear to be smoothly integrated into the school program. Elsewhere, religious education is shifted into discrete timetable slots which least interfere with the timetabling of the 'academic' subjects. When classes or areas must meet for administrative purposes, time is taken from religious education. And when the whole school assembles, it is during the time that would usually be allocated to religious education in Year 12. Such examples have convinced many teachers that C.B.C.'s 'academic emphasis' has clear priority over its seemingly waning commitment to religious education.

Yet the existence of independent Catholic schools has always been justified on the grounds that religious knowledge pervaded the entire curriculum and, indeed, the entire life of the school. It is their *raison d'être*. Even C.B.C.'s ostensibly all-important drive for academic success and social mobility is legitimated on the grounds of a religious rather than a material movement. Apart from a mission of Christian justice to the dispossessed, the elevation of Catholics to the higher levels of society would 'spread the message of Jesus' in those sectors and allow prominent Catholics the opportunity to propound Catholic viewpoints on moral and controversial issues. But the decline of religion as an educational priority at C.B.C. makes C.B.C. appear more and more like a relatively inexpensive version of the elite ruling-class schools (Connell et al., 1982) with which it is increasingly being compared in Newburyport.

One most significant aspect of religious education at the school, especially as conducted by Brothers in the senior classes, is the reluctance to embrace current controversies within the Catholic church. Such issues are not debated or discussed at C.B.C. in any public way. They do not seem to be treated as interesting or pressing matters at meetings of religious teachers. There is no evidence of any animated spirit of religious enquiry in staffroom conversation. Even more startling is the apparent lack of consideration and tolerance, especially in senior classes, for the crises of faith of many adolescent students. Such reluctance to deal wholeheartedly with religious difficulties and controversies is symbolic of the wider attempt to maintain a tentative grasp upon the old certainties of a Brothers' school despite the changed circumstances at C.B.C.

Some teachers, however, mainly young, lay teachers of junior secondary and primary religion, have embraced more liberal approaches to religious education and connect it particularly with social studies and contemporary political issues through the theme of 'social justice'. This is a theme with which a number of reformist teachers seem to resonate and it clearly has implications for a number of curriculum issues. Indeed, it is through curriculum reform in keeping with the notion of social justice that transformation at C.B.C. seems most likely to occur, for such curriculum considerations will confront and force critical reflection upon the most cherished and long-held traditions of Christian Brothers' schools, including those of order, an academic emphasis, and, most importantly, service to the needy.

Such a reappraisal, however, will require the sort of collective communicative action (Habermas 1971, 1975) that was discussed in the previous section and which would involve:

> practical common sense searching for meaningful solution and working agreement: the participants unwittingly find themselves involved in the search for culturally grounded meanings, meanings which can give normative force, 'meaningfullness', and reality to their discussions.
>
> (Pusey 1980, p. 49)

Such meanings may well be grounded in an interpretative system that is very different from that which has regulated the Brothers' world. And any challenge to the dominant paradigm of a Brothers' school will confront resistance. But as well as imposing meaning and control upon organisational members, organisational paradigms can be regarded also as 'a resource that dissidents may use in organising their awareness and action' (Brown 1978, p. 373). From this point of view, organisational paradigms, like organisational

structures, facilitate practical action as both resources and constraints (Brown 1978; Giddens 1981). Thus, for instance, an emphasis upon the crucial notion of service to the needy in the foundation of the Congregation of the Christian Brothers, in the mission of the Order, and in the origin of C.B.C. may enable the development of an understanding of the social contradictions in current practice at the school. The realisation of the disparity between genuinely reformist intentions and actual conservative practice can then become a resource for producing change (Wexler 1982). Moreover, in conditions of open discourse (Habermas 1972) in which opinions could be expressed without sanction, an awareness of alternatives might be developed. Finally, the conviction, achieved through discourse, that such alternatives were feasible options that could be brought into being would decrease the willingness of C.B.C. members to accept frustrating, demeaning or unjust conditions as unchangeable (cf. Wexler 1982).

In such a fashion, critical attention would be given to the way in which C.B.C. now caters generally for relatively affluent Catholics and actively embraces the values of the dominant class. This inhibits any critical analysis of Australian and Newburyport society, or of C.B.C. as a part of that society. The possibilities of alternative social arrangements and their political consequences, and the morality of existing and future power structures, are unlikely to be explored if teachers see Catholic schools as a means of reproducing rather than challenging the status quo. Such considerations have implications for religious education, especially for the emerging theme of social justice. Christian Brothers College teachers would need, therefore, to take seriously the arguments of Catholic educators who criticise the existing system of Catholic education. These critics suggest that:

> those who proclaim the Gospel message do so from a position within a stratified society, and that, whatever those proclaiming it may think about it, it is being proclaimed to a dominated class from within a dominant class, the very opposite of what happened in the beginning. How is it possible they ask that Christianity, which in Gospel times was a leaven of liberation, of social protest and repressed by power, has become an agent of social integration to the advantage of the same power?
>
> (Leavey 1980, p. 40)

To counter such criticism, C.B.C. might be less concerned with simple evangelisation and social mobility, and more with genuine liberation which would involve a critical analysis of power structures (Leavey 1980) and of the political implications of pursuing social justice (Flood 1979; Edwards 1976). A reappraisal

of Catholic education would emphasise that the Church and school have a part to play in social protest as well as in social integration (Leavey 1980; Flood 1979; Houtard & Rousseau 1971; Noone 1983). Catholic education, therefore, would involve reflection upon controversial issues and critical scrutiny of existing social situations (Edwards 1976) even if established Catholic viewpoints, or the Brothers' traditions, were to suffer in the confrontation with values of social justice (Crudden 1972). From this point of view, questions about the role of C.B.C. become more problematic, and critical analysis of the liberating possibilities of Catholic education would become possible.

It is important that the difficulties of bringing about such genuine reform should not be underestimated. Although the present 'crisis' at C.B.C. can be seen as a surface manifestation of deeper structural contradictions (cf. Heydebrand 1977), any *individual* dissatisfaction and penetration of the traditional paradigm that it has so far produced 'is only an initial condition for the realization of existing alternative social possibilities' (Wexler 1982, p. 176). Certainly it is true that lay teachers as well as Brothers can and do have a definite effect upon C.B.C. Clearly, all power does not reside with the principal or with the Brothers. But, at present, the complaint of many teachers is that individual initiatives are not brought into a wider arena for debate and discussion. Thus, ideas remain the property of individual teachers instead of being openly expressed and shared in discourse free from domination. Moreover, the individualistic, sometimes almost conspiratorial, actions of teachers concerning innovation deny for all teachers a sense of sharing in the wider operations of C.B.C. Authority relations, therefore, remain undisturbed despite the ability of individuals to use discretion to follow up their own initiatives, to co-operate privately with other teachers on curriculum matters, and sometimes to secure decisions favourable to them directly from the principal.

While such examples indicate a potential for organisational transformation, they do not constitute a collective change movement. Christian Brothers College as an educational institution still sits comfortably, for the most part, within the dominant hegemony.

Conclusion

The essential concern of this monograph has been with the problem of continuity and change at Christian Brothers College as resources of culture, knowledge and power are negotiated and contested. The particular situation of the school has been rendered

comprehensible through an analysis of the creative human agency of C.B.C. participants who act within the limits of their social and cultural context. The theoretical framework of production, reproduction, resistance and control, with the addition of the important notion of hegemony, has been used to explain continuity and change at the school. It must be emphasised, however, that notions of production and reproduction, resistance and control, continuity and change, are regarded in this analysis not as dualisms but as being dialectically related. Moreover, explanation has required that contested issues be presented not merely in their immediate context but in their emergence in time out of the tensions and conflicts which have been seen to exist both within C.B.C. and between C.B.C. and the wider society. In this way simple notions of reproduction have been challenged and extended by the C.B.C. case.

It has been shown that Christian Brothers College has been able to reproduce itself over time, only in the sense that the human agents are associated with the school – parents, pupils and especially teachers – have chosen to reproduce it. But the school has also been transformed over time in a series of episodes, in a continual process of 'becoming' as the human agents negotiate and renegotiate their relationships to the organisation structure. Those same humans are responsible for C.B.C.'s contribution to the reproduction of conditions of inequality in society also out of choice. Such choice has not been simply imposed upon them but had its origins, paradoxically, in the established tradition of the school that teachers attempt to improve the lot of their pupils. In this sense, C.B.C. is an arena in which hegemonic practices are played out as the 'good sense' of well-meaning teachers is caught up in 'the web of reciprocally conforming structures, activities, beliefs, and ethics that interact to support the established order and the . . . interests which dominate' (Lather 1984, p. 55). C.B.C., along with other educational institutions, is thus 'the site of active cultural work which makes and remakes an effective dominant culture' (Simpson 1978, p. 9).

At the institutional level, the wider hegemony is reflected in 'the Brothers' paradigm' which, although contested by many teachers, is resisted by them in a manner which is idiosyncratic and apolitical. Such contestation, while it suggests some potential for the emergence of a collective change movement at C.B.C., does not contain the 'clear theoretic consciousness' which Femia (1975) argues is necessary for a movement of genuine counter-hegemony. In such a movement people would not simply act out of discontent but in a full understanding of their social situation. This is not necessarily a pessimistic position regarding social change, but it is

a counter to the growth of excessive optimism that in recent years has characterised an over-reaction of reformist scholars to the earlier determinism of Bowles & Gintis (1976). Nevertheless, despite the evidence of this study that C.B.C. helps to obscure the overall domination of capitalist relations, the examples of individual resistance suggest that a C.B.C. education could have reformist possibilities which would grow out of the contradictions that have been noted throughout this monograph.

The monograph has attempted to explain why, through the interaction of agency and structure, *particular* relatively stable meanings emerged in the specific context of C.B.C. in Newburyport during a particular temporal episode in which particular structures were institutionalised by the creative actions and interpretations of participants. The apparent permanence and stability of such structures, however, is illusory as they are open to continual transformation and re-creation by organisational actors. Such transformation is clearly a possibility at C.B.C. as change is being promoted in curriculum, religious education and authority relations by individual teachers, and by small groups of participants who, through discrete actions, are developing an increasing awareness of their essential human agency. It is within the tensions and conflicts that exist both within and between individual backgrounds and aspirations, institutionalised expectations at C.B.C., and broad ideological, cultural and social practices that sources of collective action, and of transformation and resistance, may be found.

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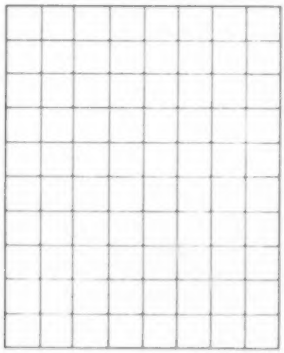

Angus, L. B. 'Class, Catholicism and education: The Christian Brothers in Newburyport'. *Discourse*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1985.
This paper provides further ethnographic data collected during the C.B.C study. It examines the school's historical emphasis upon social mobility and the implications of this emphasis for both C.B.C. and the Newburyport community. The relationship between the school and the local job market are seen to be influenced by a community expectation that a C.B.C. education produces particular cultural traits. The implications of this for a view of education as a cultural commodity are discussed.

Angus, L. B. 'Reproduction and religion in an Australian Catholic school'. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, 1985.
Further data from the C.B.C. study are discussed in this paper. The particular emphasis is upon the contested nature of religious education in the school, and the contest over what the priorities of a C.B.C. education should be. The possibility that changes in the approach to religious education may lead to more general education reforms is discussed.

Apple, M. W. *Education and Power*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, Boston, 1982.
In this extremely readable book Apple analyses the links between culture, education and the labour market. Importantly, this book treats schools not merely as agencies for the reproduction of culture, but rather as sites in which culture is produced and contested. Schools then are seen as sites in which educational and social change might begin.

Brown, R. H. 'Bureaucracy as praxis: Toward a political phenomenology of formal oganizations'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol. 23, 1978, pp. 365–82.
The essential argument of this paper is that organisational concepts like 'rationality', 'legitimacy' or 'authority' are largely structures of consciousness – the result of institutionalised expectations, or 'organisational paradigms', of what the formal structures of organisations (such as schools) should be like. Organisational change seems more feasible, Brown maintains, when we regard organisations not as 'real' entities but as continuing processes of organising.

Collins, R. 'Some comparative principles of educational stratification'. *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 47, no. 1, 1977, pp. 1–27.
This seminal paper conceptualises education as part of a cultural market – a market for cultural goods which is in many ways similar to the market for economic goods. This market is influenced,

Collins states, by various sources of demand for education – the demand of individuals for practical skills, the desire of groups for social solidarity and high status, and the concern of states for effective political control.

Collins, R. *Sociology Since Mid-century*, Academic Press, New York, 1981.

This book contains a concise review of developments in sociology and argues that the most significant sociological movements of the past decade have occurred within the sociology of education. The work of Bernstein, Bowles and Gintis, Bourdieu and Passeron, and of Collins himself, amongst others, is discussed. The work of other important sociologists, such as Goffman, is also examined.

Connell, R. W. *Teachers' Work*. George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1985.

In this extension of the work of the team that wrote *Making the Difference*, Connell presents an analysis of interview data collected from teachers during the extensive Home and Work Project. This book helps to illuminate how and why teachers in working-class and ruling-class schools construct their work, their teaching practice, as they do. A variety of perspectives emerge from data which provide interesting comparisons and contrasts with the study of C.B.C.

Connell, R. W., Ashenden, D. J., Kessler, S. & Dowsett, G. W., *Making the Difference: Schools, Families and Social Divison*. George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1982.

This is an extremely important book on education and social relations in Australia. Through a wealth of interviews with working class and ruling class children and parents, the authors examine the way in which families of different classes attempt to gain the benefits of education in different ways and with markedly different results. The perceptions of children and parents, and the authors' analysis, help us to understand the myth of 'equality of opportunity' in Australian education. The book's treatment of very expensive ruling class schools, in particular, offers interesting comparisons and contrasts with other independent schools such as C.B.C.

Giroux, H. A. 'Theories of reproduction and resistance in the new sociology of education: A critical analysis'. *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 53, no. 3, 1982, pp. 257–93.

As the title suggests, Giroux critically analyses the theories of reproduction and resistance that have been developed by radical educators during the past decade. He finds them inadequate as bases for an understanding of how schools can contribute to social justice in both education and society. Giroux sketches what he

believes would be a more adequate theory of resistance – one which would not romanticise the notion of resistance and which would take seriously the notion of human agency in social struggle.

Knights, D. & Roberts, J. 'The power of organization or the organization of power?'. *Organisational Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1982, pp. 47–63.

The central argument of this paper is that the nature of power is generally misunderstood in organisations. It is treated as if it were something that is possessed by individuals in positions of authority rather than as a relationship between people. Superiors attempt to coerce their subordinates who respond with counter-coercive strategies. Such coercion reduces people to objects whereas 'authoritative power' recognises that there is mutual dependence at all levels of organisation. This later view of power raises possibilities for organisational change.

Watkins, P. E. 'Culture, cultural resources, and the labour market: A study of Christian Brothers College'. *Australian Journal of Education*, vol. 28, no. 1, 1984, pp. 66–77.

This is a revised and expanded version of the Watkins reading in this monograph. It has a rather more extensive theoretical analysis and is referred to on several occasions in the monograph.

Wexler, P. & Whitson, T. 'Hegemony and education'. *Psychology and Social Theory*, vol. 3, 1982, pp. 31–42.

This paper presents a succinct and topical analysis of Gramsci's concept of hegemony. The authors avoid any simplistic treatment of domination or reproduction by addressing the genuine dilemmas that must be faced by school reformers. Barriers to genuine school reform are also examined.

Willis, P. *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, Saxon House, Westmead, 1977.

This important book was one of the first critical, neo-Marxist ethnographies of schooling. The first half presents a fascinating account, constructed from interviews with a group of working-class school resisters, of how working-class youth, in rejecting the culture of the school, choose to accept low status manual employment. This compelling treatment of the cultural nature of schooling is supplemented in the second half of the book by an extensive, but somewhat dense, theoretical analysis. Read it for the first half and take your chances with the rest.

About the author

Lawrence Angus taught in several public and private schools in South Australia, Victoria and the United Kingdom before joining Deakin University in 1983. His principal academic interest is in critical approaches to educational administration with particular emphasis upon the influence of practices of curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation in the construction and legitimation of forms of culture and knowledge. His related empirical work has embraced a number of areas including the restructure of educational management and provision in Victoria, classroom teaching and curricular practices, Catholic education, pupil participation in schooling, and community involvement in education.

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Quotations from Henry Giroux, 'Theories of reproduction and resistance in the New Sociology of Education: A critical analysis', *Harvard Educational* Review, 1983, **53**(3), 257–93. Copyright © by President and Fellows of Harvard College.

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